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AUTHOR	Armstrong, William B.; De Meo, Liane
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ABSTRACT

In 1989, a study was conducted of the demographic and educational characteristics of honors students in the San Diego Community College District. Focusing primarily on students enrolled in fall 1987 (N=270), spring 1988 (N=285), fall 1988 (N=264), and spring 1989 (N=245), the study gathered quantitative data from the Student Profile Questionnaire distributed during the first week of classes and qualitative data from a survey of student and faculty perceptions of the program. Study findings included the following: (1) dropout rates were 29% in fall 1987, 32% in spring 1988, 25% in fall 1988, and 34% in spring 1989; (2) females were over-represented in all semesters, though differences were less pronounced in the spring terms; (3) Caucasians and Hispanics tended to be over-represented in the honors student population, while Asian, Black, and Filipino students were under-represented; (4) 70% of the fall 1987 students and 76% of the spring 1988 students had previous college experience, with 32% of both groups possessing a college degree; (5) approximately 47% of the fall 1987 students and 37% of the spring 1988 students planned to transfer to a four-year college, while 17% of the fall 1987 students and 21% of the spring 1988 students were taking courses for personal growth; (6) students surveyed in fall 1988 and spring 1989 generally felt positive about their honors classes, citing individualized instruction, smaller class size, the intellectual challenge, and the more demanding nature of the assignments as particularly important; and (7) instructors believed that their honors students were academically superior to regular students in terms of scholastic attitude and performance. (JMC)

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HONORS PROGRAM

Evaluation

1987-89

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San Diego Community College District
3375 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 584-6500

William B. Armstrong
Liane De Meo

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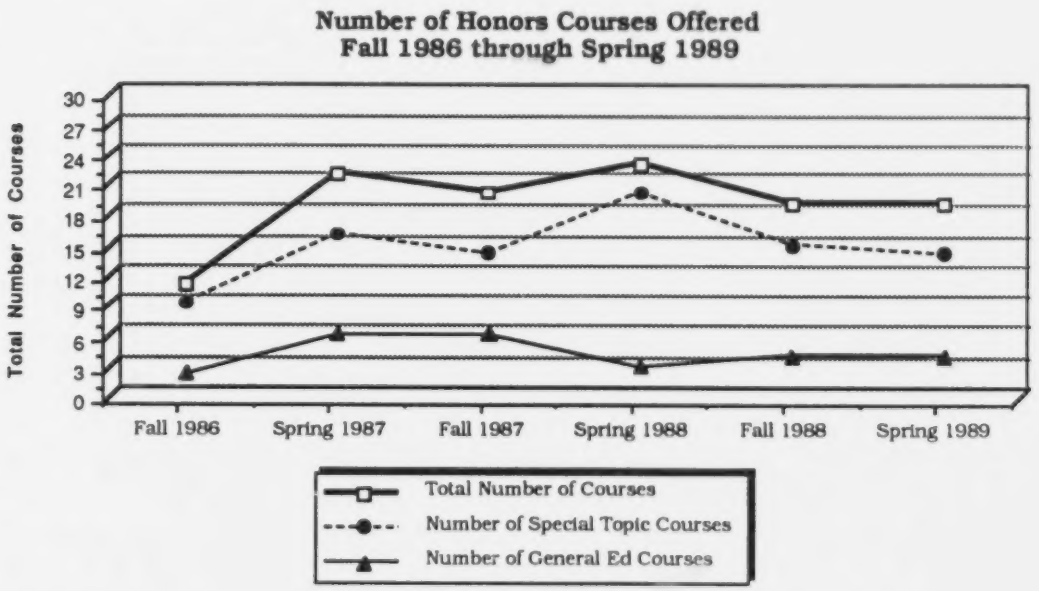
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This second report on the Honors program updates and provides information regarding the demographic and educational characteristics of Honors students. In addition to these quantitative data, other qualitative data are provided in the form of student and faculty comments and perceptions regarding the program. Although this report focuses primarily on the Fall, 1987 and Spring, 1988 semesters, a brief summary of the first year of the Honors program, (1986-1987) and summary statistics for the Fall, 1988 and Spring, 1989 semesters are also included in the report.

Number of Courses Offered

Figure E-1 below indicates the number and type of courses (General Education or Special Topics) offered by the Honors program from its inception through Spring, 1989. During the "Pilot" semester, the Honors program offered 11 courses, of which 9 were "Special Topics" courses. The Spring, 1988 semester had the highest number of courses offered (23), of these, 20 were Special Topics courses and three were General Education courses. Since Spring, 1987 the number of courses offered has been approximately 21 each semester with the preponderance of courses offered in a Special Topics area.

Figure E-1



Summary of Fall, 1987 and Spring, 1988 Results

Student Demographic and Educational Characteristics. The primary data source for the demographic and educational characteristics of the Honors students was the Student Profile Questionnaire distributed to students during the first week of classes.

There were 270 students enrolled in the Fall, 1987 semester and 285 students enrolled in the Spring, 1988 semester. Of the 270 students originally enrolled for the Fall, 1987 semester, 77 or approximately 29% dropped (this includes students who never attended class) leaving 193 students who completed. Of the 285 students originally enrolled in the Spring, 1988 semester, 90 students dropped, or approximately 32%, leaving 196 students who completed their Honors course (this includes students who never attended class).

Age. Analysis of the age distribution of the Honors students indicated that the mode of the age ranges was 30-34 years of age.

Gender. Females were over-represented in the Honors student population for both semesters, although differences were less pronounced during the Spring, 1988 semester. Approximately 65% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students and 57% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students were females compared to approximately 50% of the general student population for both semesters.

Ethnicity. The ethnic distributions of the Fall, 1987 and Spring, 1988 Honors students were different from the ethnic distribution of the general student population. During both semesters Caucasians were disproportionately represented among the Honors student population while Asian, Black, and Filipino students were under-represented. Native American and Hispanic students were strongly represented in the Honors population, and in the case of Hispanics were over-represented in the total Honors population. When examined by college, ethnic representation tended to differ significantly. Refer to Figure E-2 in the next section.

Educational Background. Among the Fall, 1987 Honors students, approximately 70% had previous college experience. Almost 32% of the Honors students had a college degree. Among the Spring, 1988 Honors students the percent of students with previous college experience grew to 76%. Approximately 32% had a college degree.

Educational Goals

Short-term. Approximately 47% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students and 37% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students planned on transferring to a four year college. Approximately 17% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students, and 21% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students were taking classes for personal growth.

Long-term. Approximately 47% of the Honors students stated that they intended to transfer to a four-year college.

Summary of Fall, 1988 and Spring, 1989 Results

Student Demographic and Educational Characteristics. There were 264 students enrolled in the Fall, 1988 semester and 245 students enrolled in the Spring, 1989 semester. Of the 264 students originally enrolled for the Fall, 1988 semester, 65 or approximately 25% dropped or never attended their class. leaving 199 students who completed. Of the 245 students originally enrolled in the Spring, 1988 semester, 82 students dropped (approximately 34%), or never attended class. leaving 196 students who completed their Honors course.

Age. Analysis of the age distribution of the Honors students indicated that the mode of the age ranges was 30 to 34 years of age.

Gender. Females were over-represented in the Honors student population for both semesters, although differences were less pronounced during the Spring, 1988 semester. Approximately 70% of the Fall, 1988 Honors students and 60% of the Spring, 1989 Honors students were females By contrast, approximately 52% of the Fall, 1988 general student population and 48% of the Spring, 1989[1] general student population was female.

Ethnicity. The ethnic distribution of the Fall, 1988 was different from the ethnic distribution of the general student population. As with the previous three semesters Caucasians were over-represented among the Honors population (78% to 65%) and Blacks were under-represented (3.4% to 9.1%). Native Americans had approximately equal representation in the Honors population compared to the general student population (6.8 for the Honors population, 7.2% for the general student population). Hispanics were slightly over-represented in the Honors population.

In the Spring 1989 semester, Caucasians were over-represented (78% to 66.8%) among the Honors student population while Black, Hispanic, and Filipino students were under-represented. Native American students were strongly represented in the Honors population. When examined by college, ethnic representation tended to differ significantly (see Figures 6 through 7c of this report).

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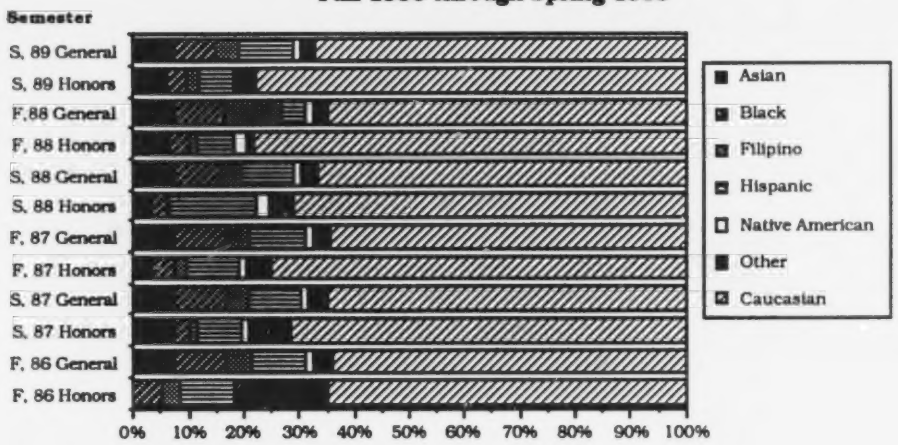
[1] Comparisons with general student population for Spring, 1989 are from the Spring, 1989 Opening Day Enrollment Report. For previous semesters, the Student Profile Report based on the end of semester statistics are used. All documents are available from the Research and Planning office.

Figure E-2

Ethnicity of Honors Students Compared With the General Student Population Fall 1986 through Spring 1989



Educational Background. Among the Fall, 1988 Honors students, 76 or approximately 29% had an Associates of Arts/Science degree or higher and a majority had previous college experience. Among the Spring, 1989, Honors students 54 or approximately 22% had at least an AA degree or higher. Spring, 1989 educational background data are incomplete because at the time of publication, evaluations had not been received from three Honors courses.

Educational Goals

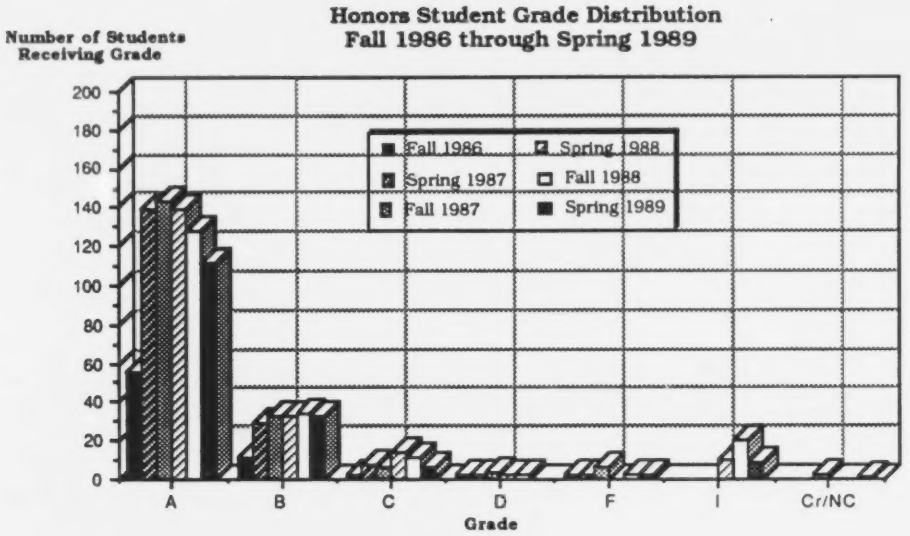
Short-term. Approximately 40% of the Fall 1988 Honors students and 45% of the Spring, 1989 Honors students planned on transferring to a four year college. Approximately 10% of the Fall, 1988 Honors students, and 4% of the Spring, 1989 Honors students were taking classes for personal growth. Almost 12 % of the Fall 1988 and 9% of the Spring, 1989 students were enrolled for professional development

Long-term. Approximately 38% of the Fall 1988 Honors students, and 42% of the Spring 1989 Honors students stated that they intended to transfer to a four-year college.

Grade Distribution

As is noted in Figure E-3 below, the majority of Honors students have received "A" grades , although the number of A's awarded has declined slightly over the last two semesters. Throughout the program the percent of A's awarded has been approximately 75% of the total grade distribution. However, the percent of A's did drop to approximately 68% of the distribution in Spring, 1989.

Figure E-3



Student Evaluations

In general, the Honors students expressed approval of their Honors class and many commented favorably on the Honors Program in general. Students cited the individualized instruction, smaller class size, the intellectual challenge, and the more demanding nature of the assignments offered by their Honors class as particularly important.

Faculty Evaluations

Participating faculty expressed favorable impressions of the Honors Program. Instructors believed that their Honors students were academically superior to their regular students both in scholastic attitude and performance. They also cited the special opportunities that the Honors program provided, such as modern equipment and technologies, field trips, special purchases, and guest lecturers.

Limits of this Report.

Although many of the intended outcomes of the Honors Program are quantifiable and easier to measure and report (e.g., descriptive statistics, demographics, retention and attrition, and transfer rates); assessment and evaluation of such variables as student and faculty "perceptions," goals, improvement of curriculum, enrichment of faculty, and enhancement of the "public image" of the SDCCD is problematic. Attempts are made to report "hard data" whenever possible; however, perceptions and other "soft data" from student and faculty comments are used primarily to illustrate important points and illuminate the quantifiable data. Another problem in accomplishing a detailed evaluation of the program is that its structure has not been constant over the course of the evaluation period. Currently the Honors committee

has identified three strands to the program, "departmental Honors," the business core at Miramar, and the general education core at City College. Although this is the current state of the program, this evaluation focuses primarily on the 1987-1988 academic year.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY i
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES vii
SDCCD Honors Program 1
Background 1
Qualification Criteria 2
Purpose of this Report 3
Limits of this report. 3
LONGITUDINAL EVALUATION 5
HONORS PILOT PROGRAM EVALUATION 6
Background 6
Methodology 6
Student Demographic and Educational Characteristics 7
Faculty Evaluations 8
Summary 8
Recommendations 10
HONORS PROGRAM EVALUATION 11
Introduction 11
Student Profile Questionnaire 11
Demographics 11
Educational Background 18
Qualification Status 20
Employment Status 20
Unit Workload 21
Educational Objectives 24
Other Honors Courses 25
Recruitment 25
Student Retention 26
Drop Survey 27
Student Evaluation 33
Faculty Evaluation 40
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 45
REFERENCES 50
APPENDIX A A-1

TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure	Title	Page
E-1	Number of Honors Courses Offered Fall, 1988 through Spring, 1989	i
E-2	Ethnicity of Honors Students Compared with General Student Population, Fall, 1988-Spring,1989	iv
E-3	Honors Student Grade Distribution Fall, 1986 through Spring, 1989	v
1	Age Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population	12
2	Age Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population by College: Fall 1987	12
3	Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population by College: Spring 1988	13
4	Gender Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population Fall 1987	14
5	Gender Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population Spring 1988	14
6	Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population, Fall, 1987	15
6A	Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population by College: City, Fall, 1987	15
6B	Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population by College: Mesa, Fall, 1987	16
6C	Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population by College: Miramar Fall, 1987	16

Figure	Title	Page
7	Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population, Spring, 1988	17
7A	Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population by College: City, Spring, 1988	17
7B	Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population by College: Mesa, Spring, 1988	18
7C	Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared with the Total Student Population by College: Miramar, Spring, 1988	18
8	Qualification Status	20
9	Honors Students' Employment Status	21
10	Unit Workload of Honors Students Compared to the Total Student Population	22
11	Comparison of Honors Student Employment Status and Workload, Fall 1986 through Spring 1988	23-24
12	Honors Student Employment Status vs Total Unit Workload	24
13	Gender Distribution of Honors Students Compared with Students that Dropped	29
14	Age Distribution of Honors Students Compared with Students that Dropped	29-30
15	Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared with Students that Dropped	30
16	Qualification Status of Honors Students vs those that Dropped - Fall 1987 and Spring 1988	31

Figure	Title	Page
17	Percent of Total Workload Dropped or Withdrawn of Students that Dropped Compared with Students Who Completed Honors Class	32
18	Honors Students' Grades	41

Table

1	Honors Program Qualification Criteria	3

SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT HONORS PROGRAM FALL, 1987-SPRING, 1988

Background

On May 14, 1986, the Board of Trustees approved the development of an Honors Program in the San Diego Community College District. The Honors Program was implemented in the Fall, 1986 semester by an Honors Committee composed of faculty representatives from City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges. As outlined by the Honors subcommittee of the SUCCESS project, the primary goals of the Honors Program were to:

1. Challenge high-achieving students and enhance their retention, transfer to four-year institutions, and employability.

2. Increase satisfaction and enrich the educational experience for participating faculty.

3. Improve existing curriculum and delivery strategies through the development of "enriched" courses taught by selected faculty.

4. Build and maintain a positive public attitude toward the San Diego Community College District.

These goals are discussed in greater detail below.

Challenge high-achieving students. For the Honors student, this goal was to be accomplished through developing and offering classes substantially different from traditional courses. Class size would be smaller, with greater emphasis placed on group interaction and increased personal attention on the part of faculty to their students. Using various instructional formats such as seminars, contracts, internships, and independent study; selected course topics were to be explored in greater depth with curricular emphasis on synthesizing information from diverse disciplines and when possible via primary sources of information rather than standard textbooks. Special attention was to be paid to development of critical thinking skills. Additional learning opportunities to be offered to the Honors student included field trips, distinguished guest speakers, and on- and off-campus cultural and social events.

Transfer. The architects of the Honors Program maintained that the "Honors" designation on a student's transcript would increase the likelihood of admission to impacted programs in four-year institutions. For the prospective four-year transfer student, a core of Honors general education courses was to be developed which would apply toward fulfilling specific and increasingly rigorous transfer requirements for the California State University and the University of California.

Employability. It was believed that the Honors Program would enhance the employability of vocational students through the offering of off-campus, "on-the-job" experiences, training projects, and internships which used current technologies and methodologies not always offered by existing college programs.

Faculty satisfaction and enrichment. Faculty satisfaction was to be increased through the opportunity to work closely with students selected on the basis of superior scholastic achievement and interest in the subject matter. Faculty involvement in special projects spawned by the Honors Program would create more opportunities for collaboration with off-campus academicians in vocational and non-vocational disciplines. Additional material compensation was also to be made available to participating faculty for planning and conducting an Honors course and participating in the on-going activities of the Honors Program. It was believed that both faculty and students would benefit from the smaller classes offered by the Honors Program.

Districtwide benefits. It was believed that an Honors Program would benefit the colleges and the district through instructional innovation and experimentation. Materials purchased such as new equipment, books, and art objects would become part of the District's permanent collection for the use and enjoyment of all students, faculty, and staff. Honors proponents maintained that offering classes to the academically superior student would result in greater attraction and retention of this type of student, thus increasing the total diversity of the student body. Proponents suggested that high school counselors would perhaps be more inclined to recommend one of the SDCCD colleges to high-achieving high school seniors. It was suggested that this type of student enhances overall public attitudes toward the colleges and is viewed as an asset. Finally, colleges with a strong Honors Program may attain greater respect among other institutions of higher learning, thus enhancing the value of the degree conferred and the transferability of the student (Piland & Gould, 1982).

Qualification Criteria for Admittance to Honors Courses

In order to ensure that only high achieving students could access Honors courses, the Honors committee set qualification criteria for students wishing to take Honors courses. These qualification criteria are shown in Table 1 on the following page.

Table 1
Honors Program Qualification Criteria

Qualification Criteria	Description
GPA (3.25+)	Students cumulative GPA is 3.25 or higher
GPA (3.50+) in subject area	Student has a cumulative GPA in the subject area of 3.50 or higher(a)
No Academic Record	Student is either a new or transfer student and does not have an academic record on file. Determination of eligibility status cannot be made (b).
Not Qualified	The student's available academic history that he or she has not met the eligibility requirements for the Honors Program (Cumulative GPA is below 3.25 and there is not a 3.50 GPA in the subject area (b).

(a) In some cases this may be only one course.
(b) May be admitted by special permission of the instructor.

A student could qualify for the Honors Program in two ways: Possess at least a 3.25 cumulative GPA, or a GPA of 3.50 or higher in the subject area of the Honors course. If a student does not have the required GPA, or does not have an academic record, they can be admitted to an Honors course with the permission of the instructor.

Purpose of this Report

An integral component of the Honors Program is an extensive evaluation conducted each semester to assess and report on student characteristics, retention, student and faculty perceptions of the program, and to make observations and recommendations pertinent to the broadly stated goals outlined in the Introduction.

This second Honors Program report presents and discusses evaluation efforts to date. These include, the planned longitudinal evaluation of the Honors Program, the Pilot Program evaluation (1986), and the most current data available from the Honors Program evaluations (1987-1989).

Limits of this report.

Although many of the intended outcomes of the Honors Program are quantifiable and easier to measure and report (e.g., descriptive statistics,

demographics, retention and attrition, and transfer rates); assessment and evaluation of such variables as student and faculty "perceptions," goals, improvement of curriculum, enrichment of faculty, and enhancement of the "public image" of the SDCCD is problematic. Attempts are made to report "hard data" whenever possible; however, perceptions and other "soft data" from student and faculty comments are used primarily to illustrate important points and illuminate the quantifiable data.

A fundamental problem inherent in a detailed evaluation of the Honors Program is the identification of specific objectives which are derived from clearly stated program goals. Although the goals of the Honors Program are reasonably clear (e.g., challenge and retain high achieving students, districtwide benefits, faculty enrichment, etc.), specific and succinct objectives against which to measure the attainment of the stated goals have not been clearly defined. For example reporting on the transfer rates of Honors students is hampered by the lack of a tracking system for students once they leave the Distrct. Inferences regarding enhanced transferabilty of students may be obtained from interviewing academic counselors, articulation coordinators, and department deans at the District and the senior institution. The educational goals of the program are also difficult to assess. Measurement of "enrichment," either quantitatively or qualitatively is problematic. The founding documents for the Honors Program, and public presentations by Honors proponents indicate that the Honors Program was to be started on a pilot basis without a highly structured Honors core program. (NISOD,1987). Whereas the program was purposely left unstructured in order to facilitate its initial implementation, evaluation of the now institutionalized program would be assisted through the promulgation of defined goals and objectives. As the Honors Program completes it's third year of operation, more specific program objectives might be developed to serve as the basis for both short-term and longitudinal evaluation and measurement of the attainment of the goals of the Honors Program.

LONGITUDINAL EVALUATION OF THE HONORS PROGRAM

Research is currently underway to evaluate the long-term educational and professional achievements of Honors students. Cumulative student data will be reviewed, and, if possible, former Honors students contacted and surveyed to determine the following:

1. Academic Honors, awards, or scholarships earned while attending the SDCCD or another college or university.

2. Post AA/AS studies and post-baccalaureate studies.

3. Plans for further formal education.

4. Graduate fellowships, assistantships, or other financial aid.

5. Current employer and occupation.

6. Re-orientation of career goals since graduation

7. Long-range career plans.

8. Whether the Honors Program helped prepare participating students for further education, or improved other aspects of their personal life.

The process for collecting and reporting these data has begun. Questionnaires are being developed to be completed by past Honors students. Through a review of Honors student rosters maintained by the Research and Planning office, attempts will be made to contact students by mail or telephone. Student records will be reviewed to determine where transcripts were sent and attempts will be made to follow up on the student's success at the receiving institution. It is hoped that a sufficient number of students will be contacted to enable the longitudinal study to proceed.

HONORS PILOT PROGRAM

Background

Prior to the full implementation of the Honors Program, a pilot program was conducted during the Fall, 1986 and Spring, 1987 semesters. This "trial" program was extensively evaluated and the results reported for each semester[1]. The analysis assessed:

1. The demographic and educational background of the students enrolled in the program;

2. The retention rate of Honors students compared to the general student population, and;

3. Student and faculty satisfaction with various aspects of the program.

Methodology

The evaluation of the Honors Pilot Program consisted of five components:

1. A student profile questionnaire that was distributed to Honors faculty by a member of the Honors committee. The questionnaire was completed by students on the first day of class.

2. A telephone survey of students who dropped an Honors course that was conducted throughout the semester.

3. A student evaluation questionnaire that was administered by a staff member of the Research and Planning office to each student at the end of the semester.

4. A faculty evaluation questionnaire that was distributed to each instructor at the end of the semester.

5. Analysis of the students' academic history to determine how the students qualified for the course.

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[1]For a complete report on the Honors Pilot Program evaluation please refer to the Honors Pilot Program Evaluation 1986-1987 report available in the San Diego Community College District Research Library.

In addition, faculty were asked to report their students who enrolled but did not attend any class meetings. The purpose of the "noshow" list was to differentiate between students who dropped a class and those who never attended class in assessing retention patterns.

Summary demographic and educational findings from the pilot program evaluation are presented below.

Student Demographic and Educational Characteristics

Demographics

There were 110 students enrolled in the Fall, 1986 semester and 276 students enrolled in the Spring, 1987 semester. The primary data source for the demographic and educational characteristics of the Honors students was the Student Profile Questionnaire distributed to students during the first week of classes.

Age. Analysis of the age distribution of the Honors students indicated that they were generally older than the general student population. For example, while approximately 38% of the general student population was 30 years of age or older, approximately 44% of the Honors students fell into the same category.

Gender. Females were over-represented in the Honors student population for both semesters under analysis. Approximately 57% of the Spring 1987 Honors students and 77% of the Fall, 1986 Honors students were females compared to approximately 50% of the general student population at that time.

Ethnicity. The ethnic distribution of the Spring, 1987 Honors students was markedly different from the ethnic distribution of the general student population and from that of the Honors students in the Fall, 1986 semester. During both semesters Caucasians were disproportionately represented among the Honors student population while Asian, Hispanic, Black, Native American, and Filipino students were under-represented. Further analysis of these data by college also indicated significant differences in the proportion of under-represented students among the Honors population compared to the general student body at each college.

Educational Background. For both semesters surveyed, almost two-thirds of the students enrolled in the Honors Program had previous college experience. Approximately 25% of the Spring, 1987 Honors students had a college degree.

Educational Goals

Short-term. Reliable differences were found in the two-ear educational objectives of Honors students enrolled in the Fall, 1986 semester compared to the objectives of students enrolled in the Spring, 1987 semester. Approximately 60% of the Fall, 1986 Honors students indicated that transfer to a four year institution as their primary educational goal; this proportion decreased to approximately 25% in the Spring, 1987 semester.

Long-term. When asked to state their long-term educational goals, approximately 50% of the Spring, 1987 Honors students stated that they intended to obtain at least a bachelor's degree. Comparatively, almost two-thirds of the Fall, 1986 students planned on achieving at least a bachelor's degree.

Student Evaluations

In general the Honors students expressed approval of their Honors class and many commented favorably on the Honors Program in general. Students cited the individualized instruction, smaller class size, intellectual challenge, and more demanding nature of the assignments offered by their Honors class as particularly important.

Faculty Evaluations

Participating faculty also expressed favorable impressions of the Honors Program. Instructors believed that their Honors students were academically superior to their regular students both in scholastic attitude and performance.

Summary

As described in the Introduction, the Honors Program had four primary goals. The Pilot Program evaluation conclusions are presented and discussed in terms of these goals.

Challenge high achieving students. Survey responses and comments from students and faculty suggested that, for the most part, the program accomplished the goal of challenging students that enrolled in Honors courses.

Enhance the retention of high achieving students. The drop rate of Honors students during the pilot semesters was 33% in Fall, 1986, and approximately 35% in Spring, 1987. The report suggested that the retention rate was primarily affected by the qualification status of the Honors students (i.e., whether they met the grade point average and

subject matter qualification criteria required for participation in the programs). There were some minor demographic differences among the Honors students who dropped, and those who dropped their Honors courses also tended to drop most of their other classes. As part of the longitudinal evaluation of the Honors Program, the overall retention rate of Honors participants will be compared with other high-achieving students who did not participate in the Honors programs to see if differences in long- and short-term retention exist.

Transfer to four-year institutions. Approximately 25% of the Honors students stated that their short-term educational goals included transfer to a 4-year institution. Almost 50% intended to obtain at least a four-year degree. Approximately 7.5% participated in Honors classes for personal enrichment. As part of the longitudinal evaluation of the Honors Program, transfer and success by Honors participants in four-year institutions will be evaluated.

Employability. The employment status of the participants indicated that approximately two-thirds worked at least part-time. Their occupations were diverse and generally unrelated to the Honors courses they were enrolled in. Data regarding longer-term employability of Honors participants will be included in the longitudinal study.

Increase satisfaction and enrich the educational experience for participating faculty. As described above, comments by participating faculty suggested that they viewed the program favorably. Most faculty surveyed indicated that participation in the Honors Program also improved their existing curriculum and delivery strategies through the development and teaching of "enriched" courses.

Build and maintain a positive public attitude toward the San Diego Community College District. Community or business surveys were not conducted, thus public attitudes toward the SDCCD as a result of the Honors Program are difficult to ascertain. As part of the longitudinal evaluation, employers, community advisory groups, four-year institutions, and staff from the K-12 system will be surveyed to assess their perceptions of the SDCCD as a result of the Honors Program.

On the basis of the Honors Pilot Program evaluation the Honors Program was judged a success. Comments by participating students and faculty indicated generally high levels of satisfaction with the program. Participating students were generally impressed with the competency of the instructors, and the quality of the subject matter presented. Faculty perceived the Honors students as generally higher caliber and were generally pleased with the reduced class size the Honors Program afforded. Both groups generally recommended the continuation of the program.

Recommendations

The Pilot Program evaluation did identify some areas of concern that were brought to the attention of the the Honors committee. These included qualification criteria and grading practices.

> **Qualification criteria**. Approximately 28% of the students participating in the Honors program during Spring, 1987 did not meet qualification criteria. Almost all of these students performed well in the class and received "A's." However, it might also have been the case that the instructors gave high grades based on their expectations of the students as "higher caliber." It was recommended that the qualification criteria be examined for validity by the Honors committee so that students who were capable of success in enriched courses would not be excluded.
>
> **Grading practices**. The high number of "A's" awarded to Honors students prompted the recommendation that the faculty review grading practices in order to avoid the potential threat of "grade inflation."

As a result of the successful first-year pilot program, the Board of Trustees voted to implement a Districtwide Honors program to be funded, developed, and implemented beginning Fall, 1987. The first year administrative budget was $134,370. In addition, supplemental Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funds were allocated to the Honors budget in order to support reduced class size.

HONORS PROGRAM EVALUATION
FALL, 1987 AND SPRING, 1988

Introduction

This section of the report updates the information contained in the Pilot Program report for the Fall, 1986, and Spring, 1987 semesters. Summary information for the Fall, 1988 and Spring, 1989 semesters are also included in the executive summary to this report. The method used to collect data for this report was identical to that outlined above for the Honors Pilot Program Evaluation. Copies of the questionnaires are included in the Honors Report Appendices, an accompanying document to this report.

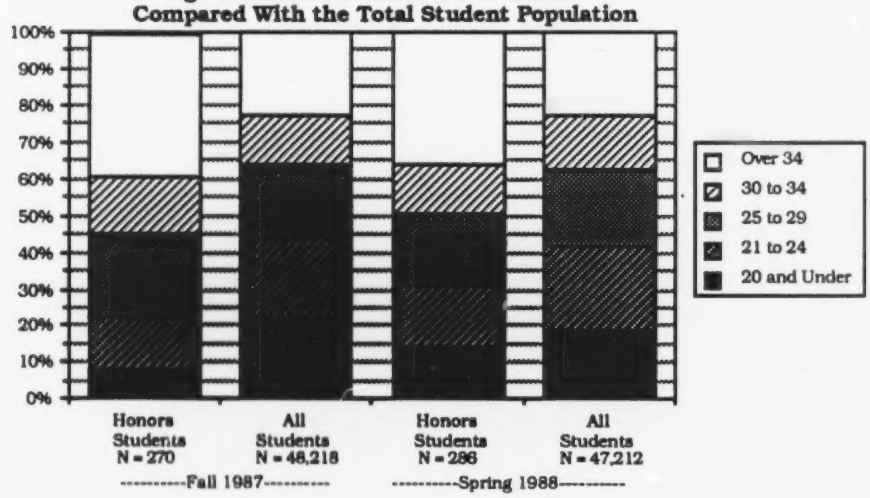
At the beginning of the Fall, 1987 semester, there were 270 students enrolled in the Honors Program and, of these students, 246 completed a profile questionnaire. Fourteen of the twenty-five students who did not complete a questionnaire were students who enrolled but never attended class. At the beginning of the Spring, 1988 semester there were 286 students enrolled in the Honors Program and, of these students, 249 students completed a profile questionnaire. Of the 37 students who did not complete a questionnaire, 21 enrolled, but never attended class. Several questions from the survey will be discussed individually.

Student Profile Questionnaire

Demographics

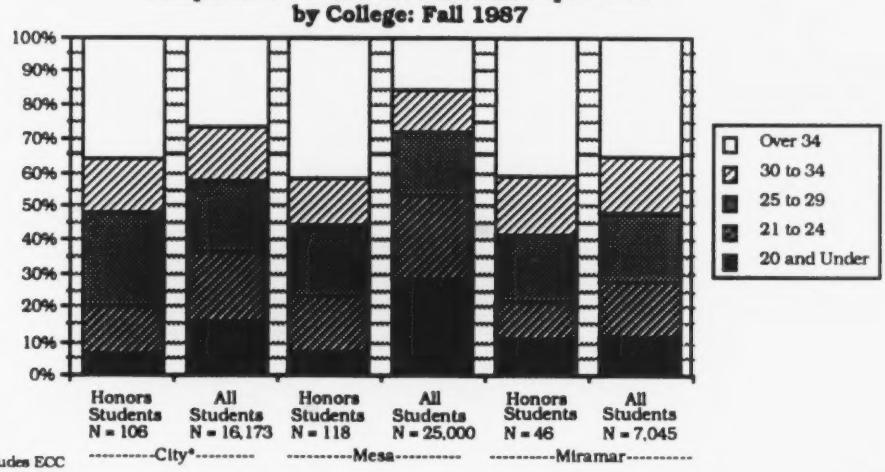
Age. As indicated in Figure 1 below, the Honors students tended to be older than the overall student population, although these differences appear less pronounced for the students surveyed in Spring, 1988. Among the Fall, 1987 Honors students surveyed, approximately 8% were 20 years of age or younger, 14% were age 21 to 24 and approximately 78% were age 25 or older. Among the Spring, 1988 Honors students surveyed, approximately 14% were 20 years of age or younger, 17% were age 21 to 24, and 69% were age 25 or older. For both semesters, the Honors students appear to be disproportionately represented in the older age categories, particularly for those age 34 and above, compared with the total student population. However, with the exception of the age 34 and above category, the age distribution of Spring, 1988 Honors students more closely resembles the age distribution of the total student population.

Figure 1
Age Distribution of Honors Students
Compared With the Total Student Population



Further analysis of the age distribution of Honors students by college (Figure 2) indicated that the Honors students at Mesa and City Colleges were generally much older than the total student population at those colleges. While 46.6% of the general student population at Mesa College was age 25 or older in Fall, 1987, 76.3% of the Honors students at Mesa College were age 25 or older. At City College, approximately 79% of the students enrolled in an Honors class were age 25 or older, as compared to 63.4% of the general student population at City College. At Miramar College, the proportion of students age 25 or older was only slightly larger (78.3%) than that of the general student population at that college (72%).

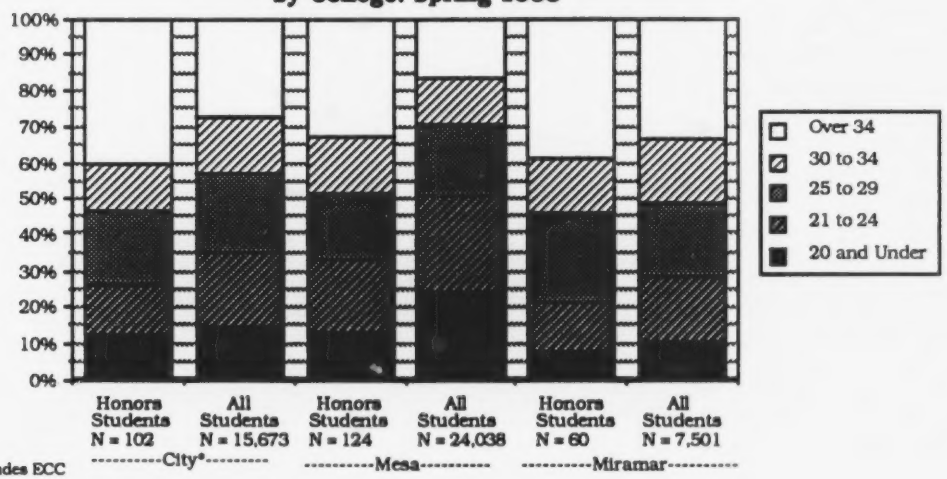
Figure 2
Age Distribution of Honors Students
Compared With the Total Student Population
by College: Fall 1987



* Includes ECC

Comparison of the age distributions for Spring, 1988 suggests a similar pattern to that observed for the Fall, 1987 semester (see Figure 3). Among the Honors students at City College, approximately 74% were age 25 or older compared with approximately 64% of the total City College population. At Mesa College, approximately two-thirds were age 25 or older while in the total Mesa College population, approximately one-half were age 25 or older. In contrast, at Miramar College, Spring, 1988 Honors students were somewhat younger than the total Miramar College population. Approximately 65% of the Honors students were 25 years of age or older compared to approximately 72% of the total Miramar student population.

Figure 3
Age Distribution of Honors Students Compared With the Total Student Population by College: Spring 1988



Gender. The gender data indicated that, as in previous semesters, a greater proportion of females than males were enrolled in the Honors program. While 64.8% of the students enrolled in the Honors Program Fall, 1987 were female, they comprised only 48.7% of the general student population. An comparison of the gender distribution of the Spring, 1988 Honors and total student population indicates that although the male-female proportion had changed, females continued to outnumber males by approximately 15%. Examination of the data within each college indicate a similar distribution to that for the entire district. However, when examined within certain courses, gender distribution differences were even more pronounced. For instance, in Fall, 1987, a child development class and a Spanish class were 100% female, an interior design class was 93% female, and one art class was 77% female. Only one history class attracted more males (75%) than females. The gender distribution of the Honors students is shown in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4
Gender Distribution of Honors Students Compared to the Total Student Population Fall 1987

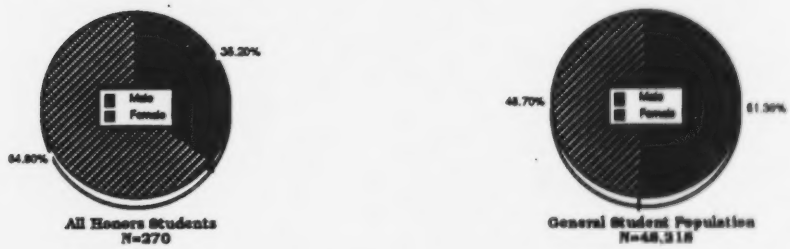


Figure 5
Gender Distribution of Honors Students Compared to the Total Student Population Spring 1988

Ethnicity. Until the Spring, 1988 semester, there had been a steady increase in the proportion of Caucasian students in the Honors program. However, the proportion of Caucasian Honors students declined from approximately 75% in Fall, 1987, to approximately 69% in Spring, 1988. When comparing the total and Honors student populations, Caucasians were overrepresented in the Honors population by approximately 11% in Fall, 1987. This disproportionate representation dropped to approximately 4% in Spring, 1988.

In the Fall, 1987 semester, a comparison of the total and Honors student populations revealed that Asians were underrepresented at Miramar and Mesa Colleges and they comprised less than 2% of the Honors students at City College. Black students were also underrepresented among the Honors student population at all three colleges. While the total Black student population districtwide was approximately 9%, 6.6% of the Honors students at City College, 6.5% at Miramar College, and none of the Mesa College Honors students were Black. Hispanic students were 10.3% of the general student population, yet were slightly under-represented in the

Honors Program (9.3%). There were no Hispanic students enrolled in the Miramar College Honors Program, although they represent 7% of the general student population at that college. Filipino students were underrepresented in the Honors Program (2.2%) compared to their proportion in the general population (4.1%). Figures 6 to 6C below indicate the Fall 1987 ethnic distribution of the total student population and the Honors students districtwide and for each campus.

Figure 6

Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared With Total Student Population

Fall 1987

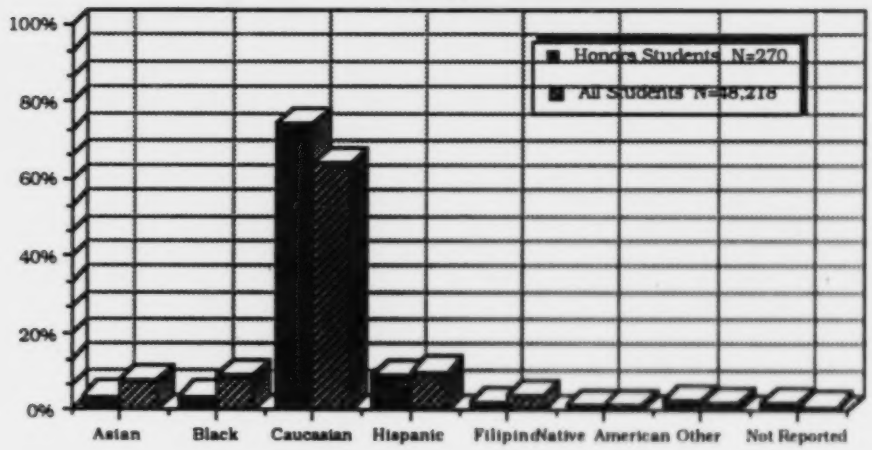
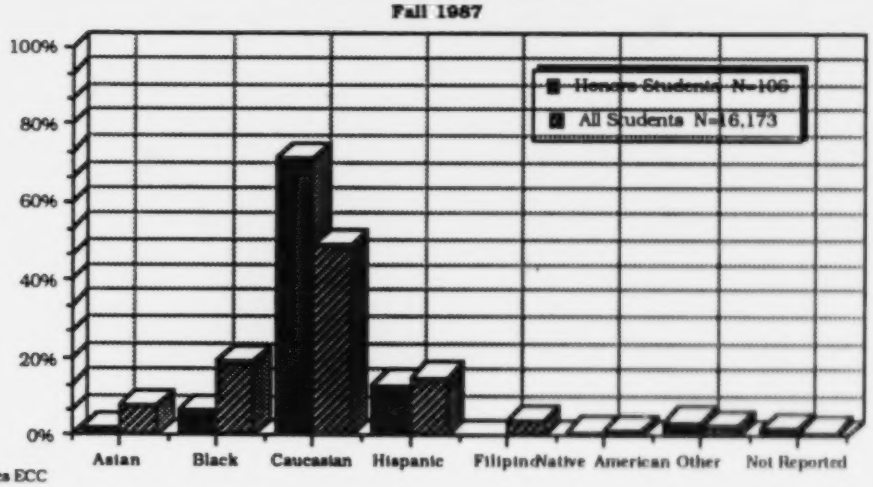


Figure 6A

Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students by College: City*

Fall 1987



* Includes ECC

Figure 6B

Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students by College: Mesa

Fall 1987

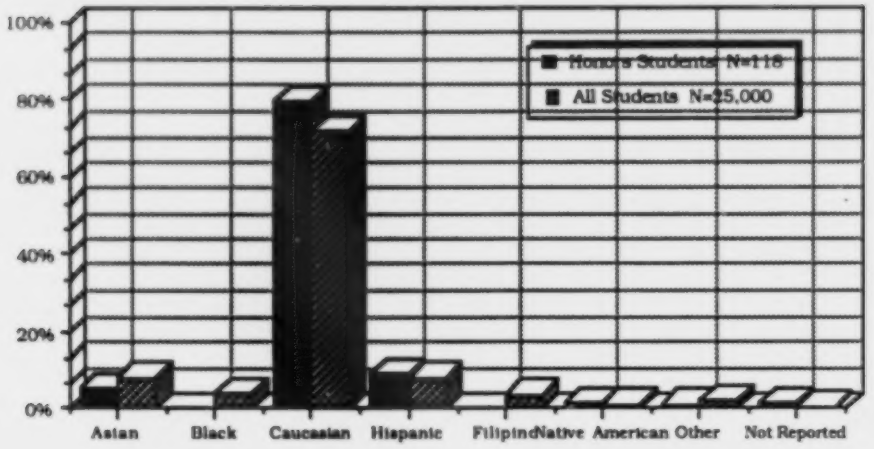
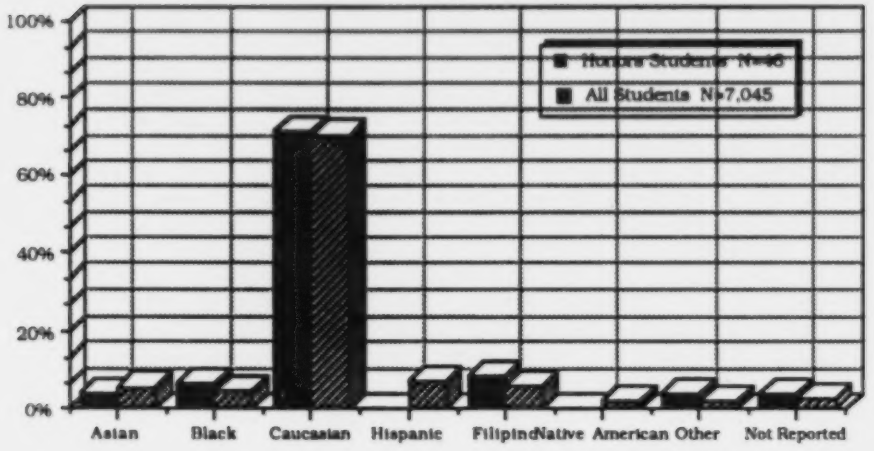


Figure 6C

Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students by College: Miramar

Fall 1987



There were some minor changes in the ethnic distribution of Honors students during Spring, 1988. The overrepresentation of Caucasians in the program decreased slightly to 4% and the proportions of Native American, and Hispanic students in the Honors population increased. When examined by college, the most significant change was the proportion of Hispanic students participating in the program. However, the proportions

of Black, Asian, and Filipino students decreased somewhat during the Spring, 1988 semester. Figures 7 to 7C below indicate the Spring 1988 ethnic distribution of the total student population and the Honors students districtwide and for each campus.

Figure 7
Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared With the Total Student Population
Spring 1988

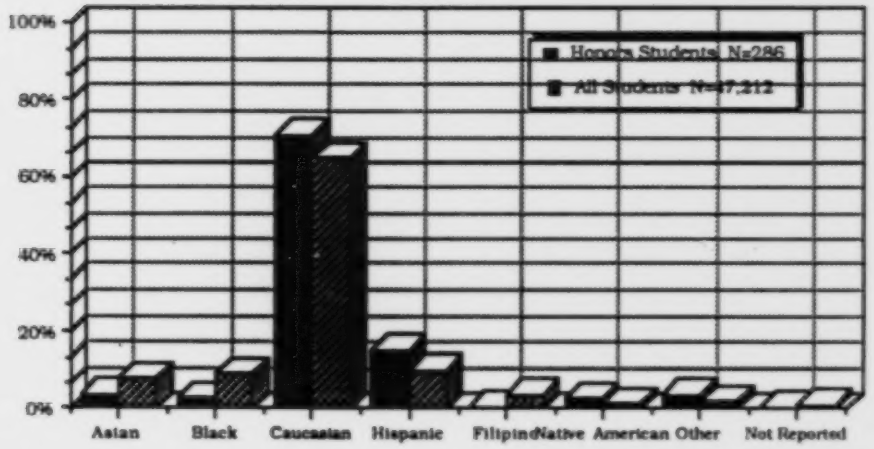
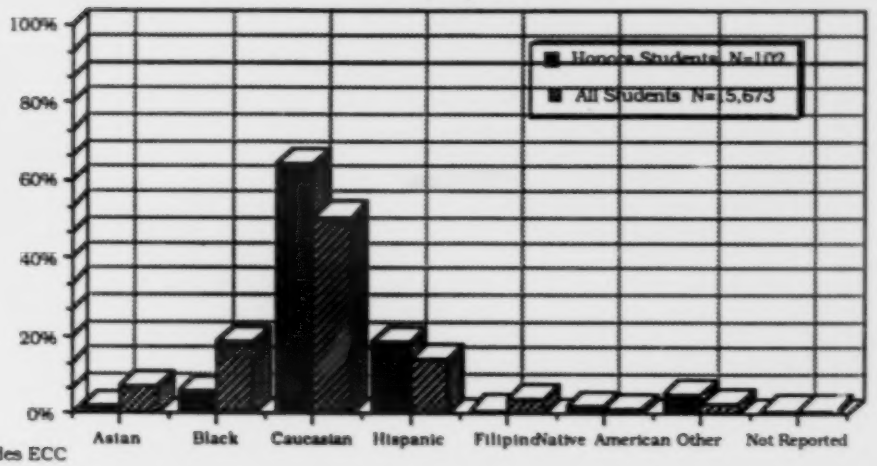


Figure 7A
Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students By College: City
Spring 1988



* Includes ECC

Figure 7B
Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students by College: Mesa
Spring 1988

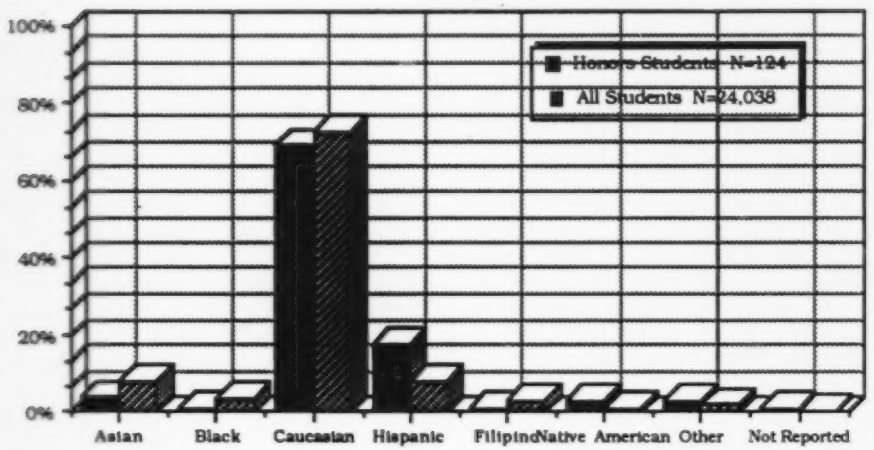
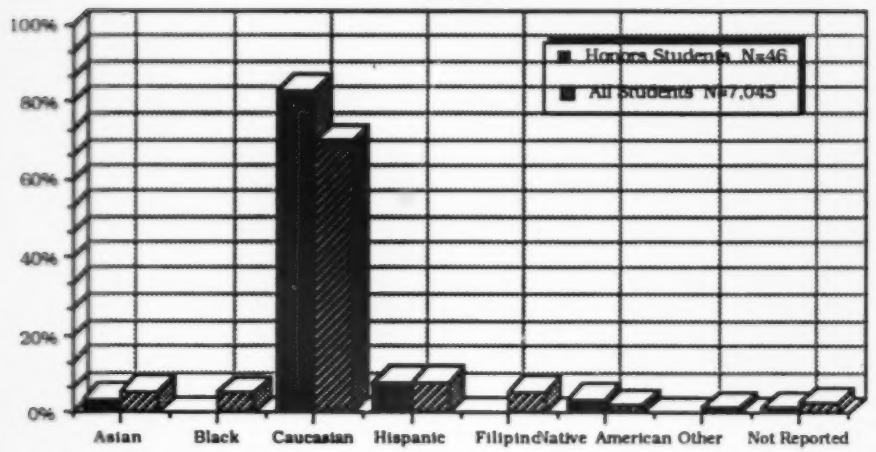


Figure 7C
Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students by College: Miramar
Spring 1988



Educational Background

Fall, 1987. More than 70% of the Honors students indicated they had previous college experience. The average number of units completed at the time of enrollment in the Honors program was 71. Further, almost 32% of the students who enrolled in the Honors Program had a college degree, 9% had an associate

degree, 17% had a bachelor's degree, almost 5% had a master's degree and three of the students had a doctoral degree. Nearly 30% of the Honors students had participated in an Honors or advanced placement program in high school.

Spring, 1988. Approximately 76% of the Honors students had previous college experience. The average number of units completed at the time of enrollment was 58. Approximately one-third had a college degree. Of these students, approximately 7% held an associate degree, 19% held a bachelor's degree, and 7% had achieved a master's degree, while one student held a doctoral degree. Approximately 37% of the Honors students had participated in an Honors or advanced placement program in high school.

The Honors students were asked if the Honors Program was a reason for enrolling at the college. Approximately 80% of the Fall, 1987 students and 76% of the Spring, 1988 students responded that the existence of the program was not a primary reason for college enrollment. Further analysis suggested that the motives for enrolling varied with the course. A personal interest in the subject matter was often cited as a reason for enrolling in anthropology, history, and Spanish literature classes. Career enhancement and career opportunity were reasons for enrolling in architecture, interior design and child development classes. In addition, students who enrolled in business and accounting classes stated that they enrolled in these courses because of transferability of the courses to the San Diego State University (SDSU) School of Business Administration. A sample of the comments follows:

- I would like to transfer to the SDSU business program.

- I was looking for something more challenging and I enjoy the instructor tremendously.

- Completing an Honors college-level course gives me Honors distinction and prestige.

- A chance to get specialized instruction.

- To improve my knowledge and enhance my present position.

- Opportunity for a better quality education.

- Smaller classes, more group discussions and more importantly, the instructor's reputation.

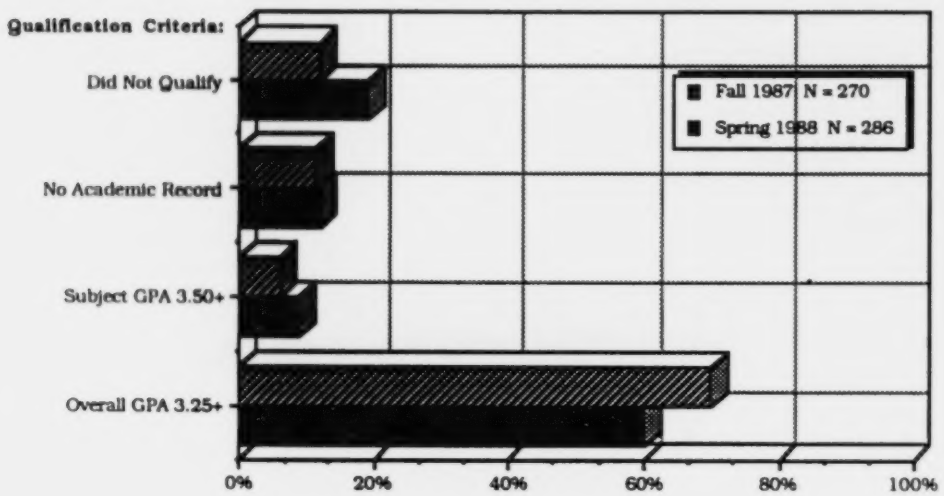
(Refer to Honor Report Appendices: Appendix I, for a complete listing of comments.)

Qualification Status

A review of the Honors students records showed that almost 71% of the Fall, 1987 students and 63% of the Spring, 1988 students who completed an Honors course qualified with a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or more. Approximately 6% of the Fall, 1987 and 8% of the Spring, 1988 students qualified with a cumulative GPA of 3.50 or more in the subject area of the Honors course.

The other students in the classes were admitted for various reasons with the permission of the instructor. Some students were admitted because they already had a bachelors degree (23 in Fall, 1987, and 34 in Spring, 1988). Approximately 35% of the Fall, 1987 students and 15% of the Spring,1988 students had received a bachelor's degree. Some students were admitted (presumably by special permission of the instructor) that did not have an academic record with the San Diego Community College District. Approximately 11% of the Honors students in the Fall, 1987 semester and 10% of the students in the Spring, 1988 semester did not have an academic record with the district. Almost 11% of the Fall, 1987 and 17% of the Spring, 1988 students did not qualify on any criteria. Refer to Figure 8 below.

Figure 8
Qualification Status



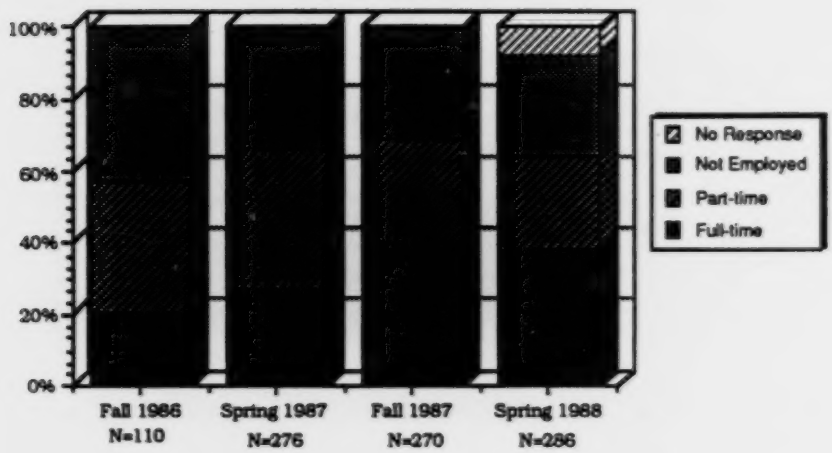
Employment Status

An analysis of the employment status of the Fall, 1987 Honors students indicated that over 40% were employed full-time, nearly 29% were employed part-time and 30.5% were not employed. These percentages differed slightly during the

Spring, 1988 semester. Approximately 39% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students were employed full-time, 25% employed part-time, while 28% were not employed. A comparison of these data with data from other semesters indicated that more Honors students were employed full-time in the Fall, 1987 semesters than in other semesters as shown below in Figure 9.

Figure 9

Honors Students' Employment Status



In addition, a review of the employment status of the Fall, 1987 Honors students at each college indicated that 37.2% of the students enrolled in Honors courses at Miramar college did not work as compared to 29.4% at Mesa College and 28.8% at City College. Employment status by college for the Spring, 1988 semester indicated that approximately 32% of the City College Honors students did not work compared with 28% at Mesa College, and 35% at Miramar College.

The Honors students indicated that they worked in a variety of occupations in many fields including teaching, architecture, archeology, fund-raising, engineering, science, interior design and others.

Unit Workload

Honors students generally enrolled in more units than did non-Honors students. For Fall, 1987, approximately 33% of the Honors students were full-time students enrolled in 12 units or more, compared to only 11.2% of the general student population. Moreover, more than 48% of Honors students were enrolled in at least 9 units compared to slightly more than 20% of the regular students. These data are similar to data reported from Spring, 1988 and previous semesters as indicated below in Figures 10.

Figure 10
Unit Workload of Honors Students Compared to the Total Student Population

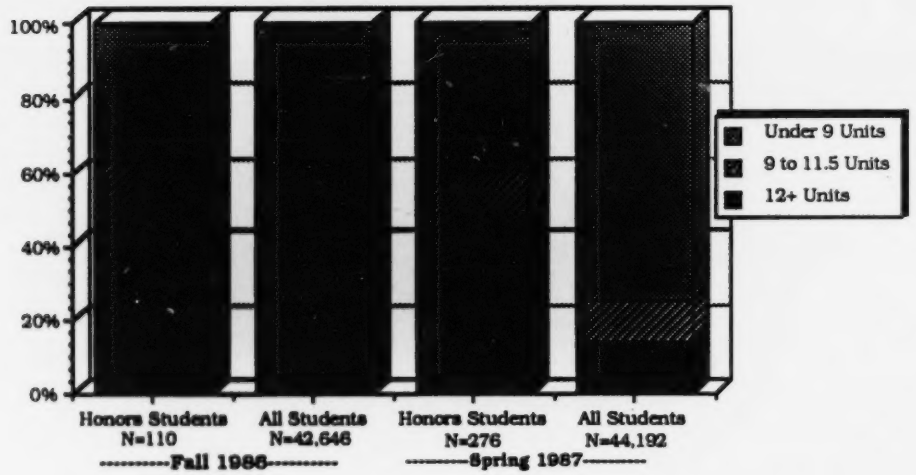
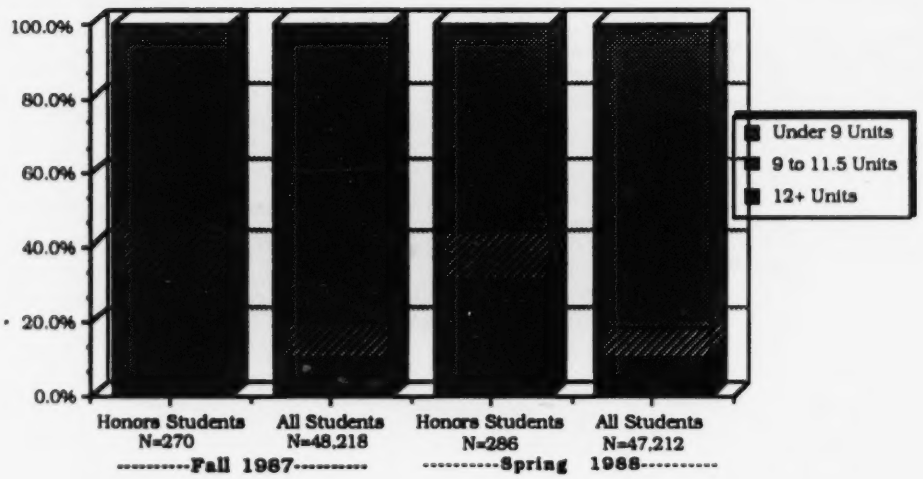


Figure 10 (cont).



As might be expected, there was a positive relationship between the number of Honors students working full time and the average unit workload of each student. An analysis of these data over the last four semesters indicates that as the proportion of students employed full-time increased, the average number of units enrolled in by Honors students decreased. These data are shown in Figures 11 and 12 below.

Figure 11
Comparison of Honors Student
Employment Status and Workload
Fall 1986
N=110

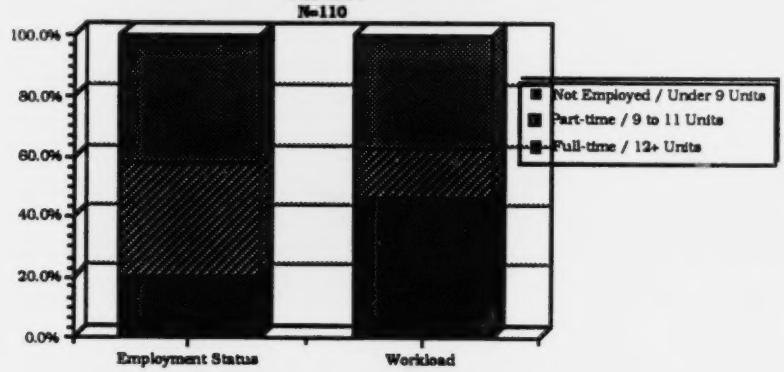


Figure 11 (continued)

Spring 1987
N=276

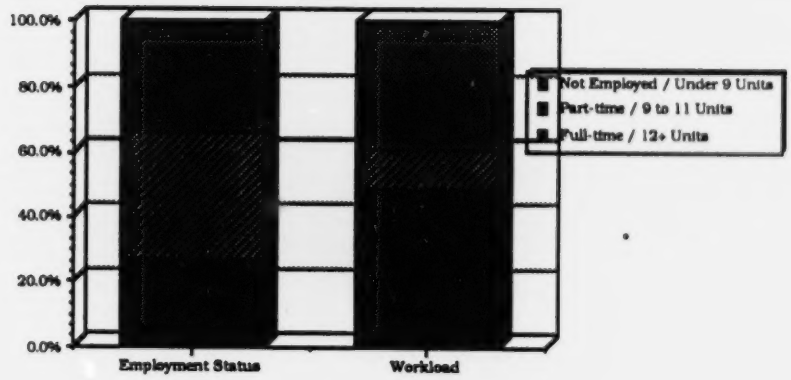


Figure 11 (continued)

Fall 1987
N=270

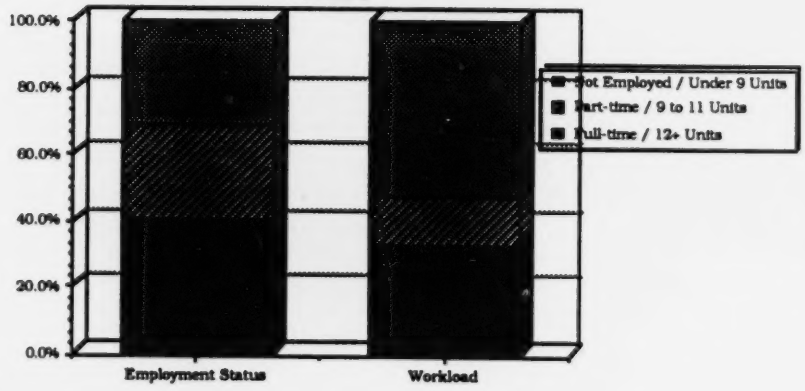


Figure 11 (continued)

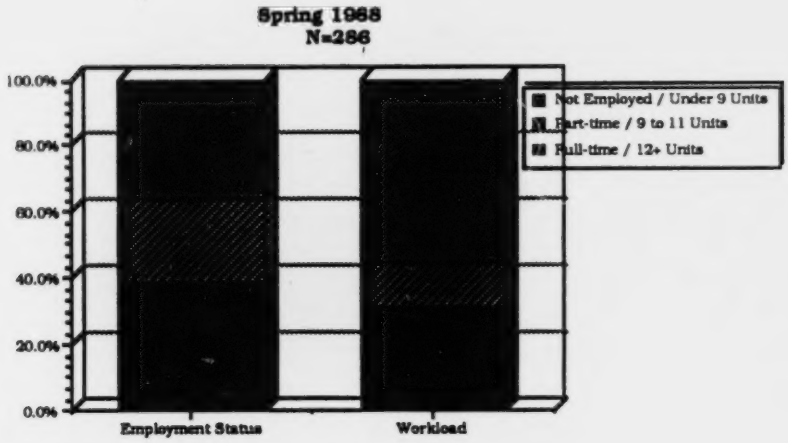
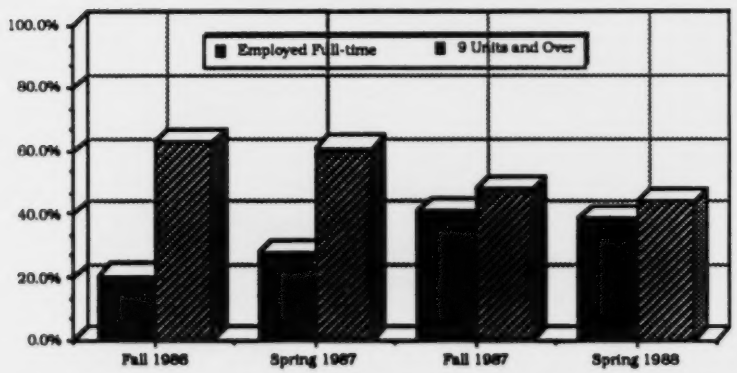


Figure 12
Honors Student Employment Status vs Total Unit Workload



Educational Objectives

The Honors students were asked to state their "**short-term**" educational objective for the next two years. Almost 47% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students and approximately 37% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students responded that they planned to transfer to a 4-year institution. Approximately 19% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students and approximately 15% of the Spring, 1988 students planned to complete a bachelor's degree, while less than 3% planned to complete a master's degree. Approximately 17% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students and 21% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students were taking classes for personal growth. Generally, students taking classes for personal growth were older and already held an educational degree.

The students were also asked to state their "**long-term**" educational objective. More than 29% intended to earn a bachelor's degree, almost 24% intended to earn a master's degree and nearly 6% stated they planned to obtain a doctoral degree. Overall, almost 50% of Honors students without a degree planned to transfer to a 4-year institution at some point in their academic careers. Similar data for the general student population in Fall, 1987 were not available; however, 47% of the students enrolled during the Fall, 1987 semester and 46% of the students enrolled during the Spring, 1988 semester indicated on their application for admission that they planned to transfer to a 4-year college.

Other Honors Courses

The students were asked if they had enrolled in Honors courses in previous semesters, and, if so, to specify which classes. Approximately 13% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students stated they had attended at least one other Honors class in previous semesters. Several art and anthropology students were enrolled in courses taught by instructors with whom they had previously taken courses.

The students were also asked if they were concurrently enrolled in other Honors courses. Ten of the 193 Fall, 1987 Honors students were enrolled in more than one Honors course. Three of these students had participated in the Honors Program in previous semesters. Comparatively, fourteen of the Spring, 1988 Honors students were concurrently enrolled in more than one Honors course, and of these students, seven had participated in the Honors Program in previous semesters.

Recruitment

Most students were informed of the program by Honors faculty. Almost 47% of the Fall, 1988 Honors students and 44.4% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students stated they had heard about the program either through an instructor in another class or through the instructor teaching the class.

Nearly 20% of the Fall, 1987 and 19% of the Spring, 1988 students learned about the Honors Program in the class schedule and over 13% of the Fall, 1987 and 11% of the Spring, 1988 students received an announcement from the District through the mail.

A few students stated they had learned about the Honors Program through brochures, flyers, class presentations, other students, friends and family. Many students listed more than one source.

Majors

The Honors students specified a variety of majors. For Fall, 1987 the most common majors were: Business (11.1%), Interior Design (9%), Psychology (8.3%),

Fine Art (7.6%), Liberal Arts (6%) and Foreign Language (5.6%). For Spring, 1988, the most common majors were: Business (10.1%), Foreign Language (8.2%), English (6.2%), Liberal Arts (5.8%), Psychology (5.1%) and Political Science (5.1%). As with previous Honors students, the students' majors were often related to the types of courses they were enrolled in. For instance, most students enrolled in an interior design class were interior design majors, a child development class attracted mostly child development majors and a psychology class dealing with behavioral problems of children attracted psychology majors.

The majors of the Honors students are listed in Appendix I of the Honors Report Appendices.

Student Retention

The drop rates for the first two semesters of the Honors program (Fall, 1986 and Spring, 1987) were approximately 33% and 35% respectively. These rates include students who enrolled, but never attended class. Honors faculty maintained that there was a difference between students who never attended class, and those who dropped class, therefore these "no shows" should not be included when calculating the attrition rate. As a result of faculty input, the Research and Planning office distributed a "no-show" form to Honors instructors and requested that the instructors provide the names of students who never attended class. The data showed that 13% of the 77 students who dropped a class during the Fall, 1987 semester were "no-shows" compared to 23.3% of the 90 Spring, 1988 students who dropped a class. A review of the drop surveys indicated that four students whose names were not on the Fall, 1987 no-show lists and three students whose names were not on the Spring, 1988 no-show lists stated that they had never attended class.

In the Fall, 1987 semester, the drop rate (including no-shows) declined to approximately 29%. The drop rate in the Spring, 1988 semester was higher than the Fall, 1987 rate, but lower than one year prior (31.5%). The decline in the drop rate may be attributed to a more stringent enforcement of admission criteria established for the Honors Program.

If the students who enrolled but never attended class are not included in the attrition rate, the Fall, 1987 drop rate for Honors students decreases to 23%, and the Spring, 1988 drop rate decreases to 24%.

The drop rate for the general student population (which includes both no-shows and students who drop at least one unit of their workload) was higher than the drop rate for Honors students for the comparison semesters. This rate was 40% in both the Fall, 1987 and Spring, 1988 semesters. It is not known with certainty if this rate would decline if no-shows were not included in the overall drop rate calculation.

Drop Survey

A survey of students who dropped or withdrew from an Honors course was conducted to determine the reasons for dropping the course, and to obtain demographic data that would allow a comparison between these students and those who completed an Honors course (see Appendix I for a copy of the survey instrument). Students were contacted by telephone. Attempts were made to reach each student at least three times including day, evenings and weekends before they were classified as a "non-response."

Forty-nine students, or approximately 64% percent of the Fall, 1987 students who dropped an Honors course were successfully contacted. The others were not reached after three attempts (approximately 26%), or had moved/had a disconnected number (almost 10%). Of the Spring, 1988 Honors students who dropped an Honors course, only 39% were successfully contacted; over 46% were not reached after three attempts, and almost 15% had either moved or had a disconnected number.

Reasons for dropping

The survey responses indicated that 25% of the Fall, 1987 students and approximately 30% of the Spring, 1988 students who dropped an Honors course did so because the class conflicted with their work schedule. Nearly 17% of the Fall, 1987 students and approximately 15% of the Spring, 1988 students dropped because they were already carrying too many units, and 23% of the Fall, 1987 students and 37% of the Spring, 1988 students specified personal reasons including child care, divorce and health. Several Fall, 1987 Honors students dropped the class because they were dissatisfied with the class and one student stated that the Veterans Administration would not pay benefits for the class.

Comments

When asked if they were satisfied with the course, 71% of the Fall, 1987 students and approximately 74% of the Spring, 1988 students who were contacted and had attended at least one class stated they were satisfied with the course and made the following comments:

- Outstanding teacher.
- More demanding than I expected.
- The caliber of students was good.
- I would like to see it offered again.
- Individual instruction, good instructor.

In addition, 4% of the Fall, 1987 students felt they had not attended long enough to formulate an opinion. Approximately 9% of the Fall, 1987 and 11% of the Spring, 1988 students stated they were dissatisfied with the class for a variety of reasons including class size, subject matter, class format, or the instructor. One student did not appear to be prepared for a seminar course and stated: "the teacher strayed from the text. I wanted him to cover the material in the text." Other comments are listed below.

- The teacher procrastinated in giving the oral presentation assignments. Students only had one week to prepare.

- Class participation was dampened and depressed in this group.

- Mid-term was to be held orally at a restaurant

- Very large class. The teacher was disappointed in the size of the class and played favorites with those he had approved.

- More difficult than I expected. Literature was very difficult in Spanish.

The students who dropped an Honors course were also asked if they felt they were qualified for the class. Of those contacted, almost 90% of the Fall, 1987 and approximately 96% of the Spring, 1988 students felt they were qualified. Those who did not feel qualified made the following comments:

- The instructor relied heavily on a class he had previously taught. Ten of the fifteen students had taken that class. The class was not mentioned as a prerequisite.

- Biology was more than I expected.

- I should have taken another humanities course before enrolling in this one.

- I only had 2 semesters of Spanish and the class was taught in Spanish.

- Did not realize I was in an Honors class.

Demographics of Students who Dropped. A comparison of the demographic characteristics of students who dropped an Honors class with the characteristics of all Honors students indicated that more female students dropped an Honors class than male students; older students tended to drop at higher rates than younger students; and Caucasians dropped at lower rates than did non-Caucasians. A demographic profile of students who dropped compared to those

who completed is shown in Figure 13 (Gender), Figure 14 (Age), and Figure 15 (Ethnicity).

Figure 13
Gender Distribution of Honors Students Compared With Students That Dropped Honors Class
Fall 1987

Spring 1988

Figure 14
Age Distribution of Honors Students Compared With Students That Dropped Honors Class
Fall 1987

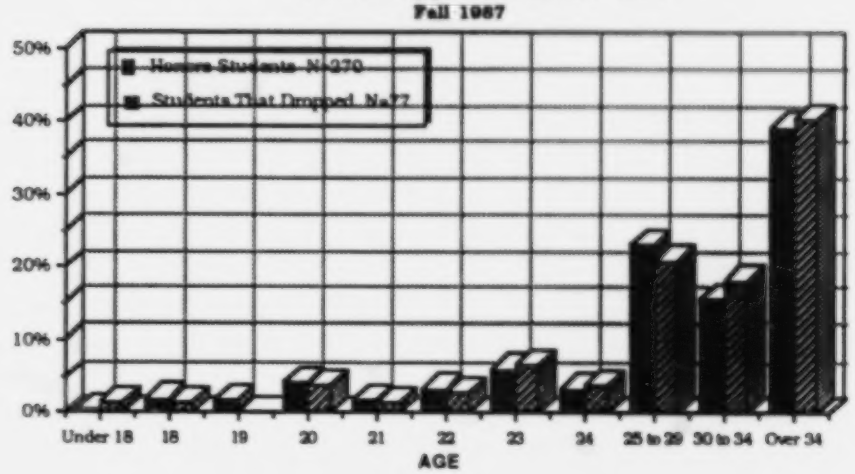


Figure 14 (cont)

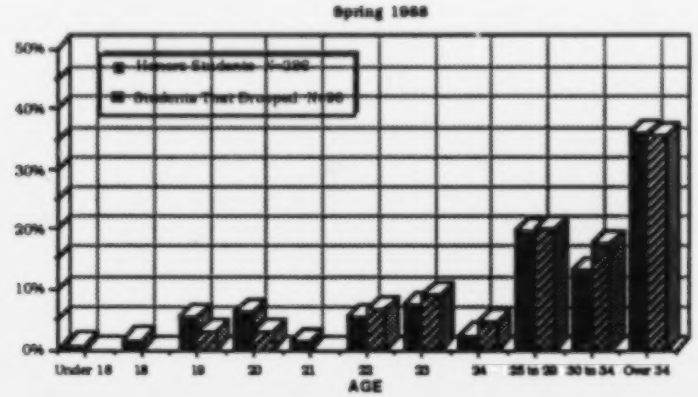


Figure 15
Ethnic Distribution of Honors Students Compared With Students That Dropped Honors Class

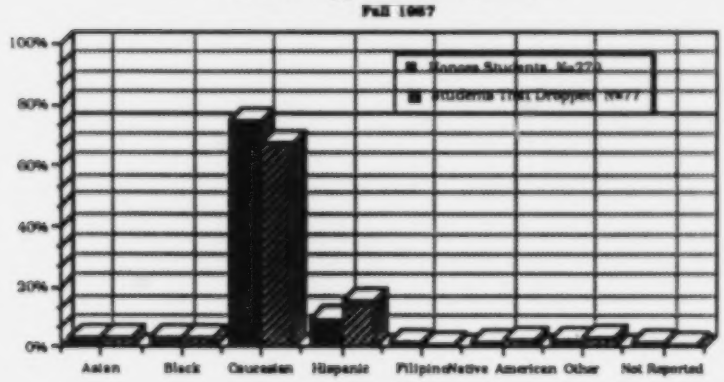
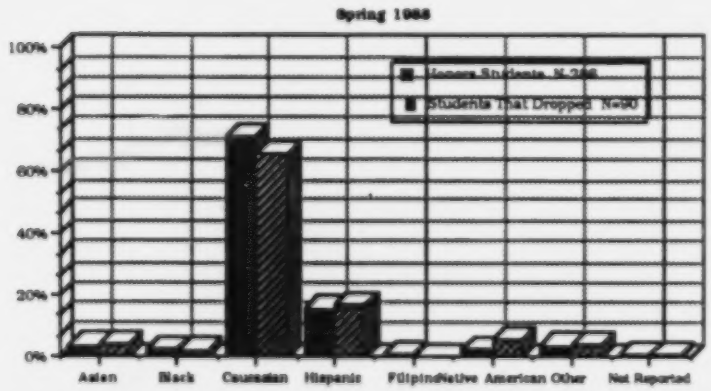


Figure 15 (continued)



Qualification Status

The qualification status of students that dropped an Honors class is almost identical to those that completed the class in the Fall, 1987 semester. There were slight differences in the Spring, 1988 semester as shown in Figure 16 below.

Figure 16
Qualification Criteria

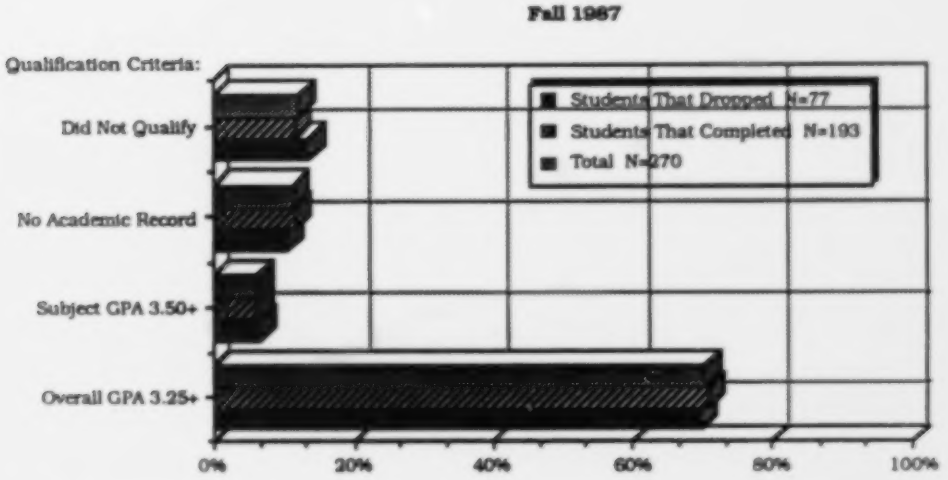
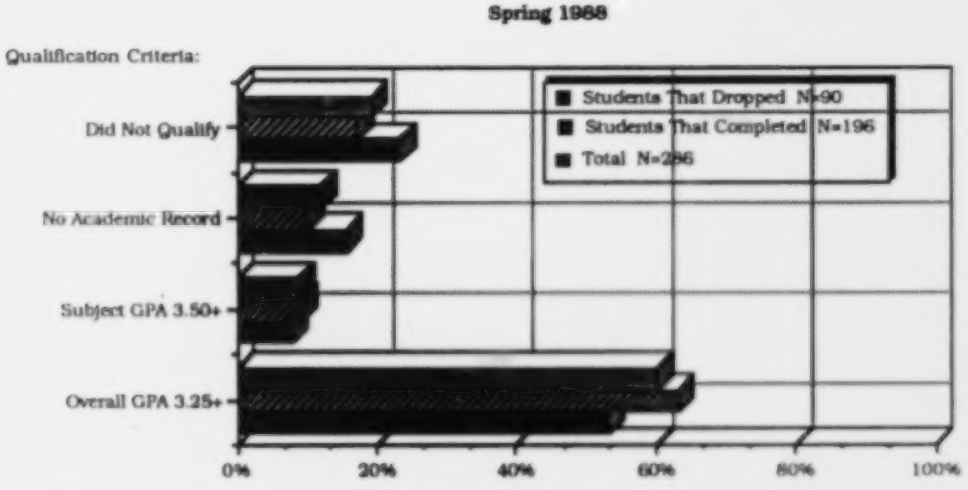
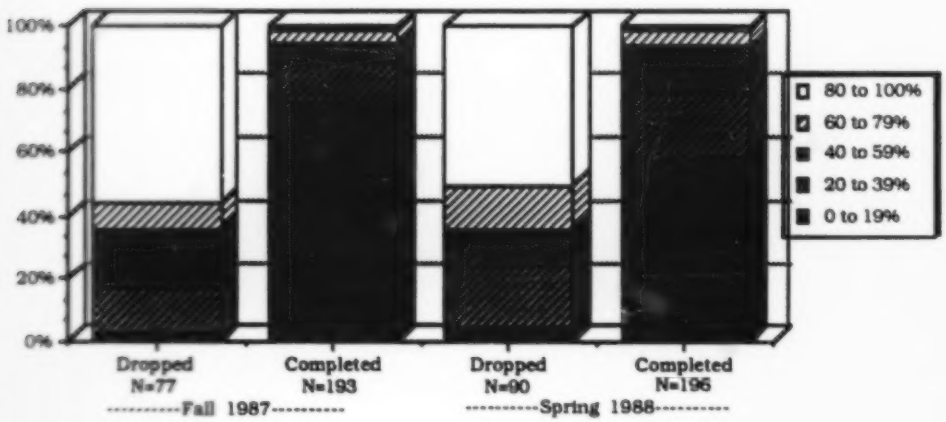


Figure 16 (continued)



Drop/Withdrawal Patterns. As in previous semesters, students who dropped an Honors course tended to drop other classes as well. For example, in Fall, 1987, nearly 45% of the students who dropped an Honors course dropped all their classes and slightly more than 77% dropped half of their classes. Comparatively, less than 20% of the Honors students who completed the course dropped half their classes and almost 59% did not drop any classes. In Spring, 1988, approximately 48% of the students who dropped an Honors course dropped all their courses and approximately 72% dropped at least half of their courseload. These data are shown in Figure 17 below.

Figure 17
Percent of Total Workload Dropped or Withdrawn of Students That Dropped compared With Students Who Completed Honors Class



Employment Status. There was not a substantial difference between the employment status of the students who completed a class and the employment status of the students who dropped. Nearly 44% of the students who dropped during both the Fall, 1987 and Spring, 1988 semesters were employed full-time compared to 41% of the Fall, 1987 and 42% of the Spring, 1988 students who completed the course.

The proportion of students who dropped a class and worked full-time increased from 33% in the Spring 1987 semester to approximately 44% for both the Fall, 1987 and Spring, 1988 semesters. An increase in the proportion of students who completed an Honors course and who were employed full-time was also noted earlier in this report.

Student Evaluation

Honors students were asked to evaluate their Honors course at the end of the semester. A course evaluation questionnaire was distributed to each Honors class by a staff member from the Research and Planning office (Refer to Appendix I). The questionnaire was designed to elicit comments from Honors students concerning the students' level of satisfaction with the Honors course, the instructor, the students enrolled in the course and the Honors Program. Almost 87% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students and approximately 90% of the Spring, 1988 students who completed an Honors course completed an evaluation questionnaire. A questionnaire was mailed to all students who were not in class on the day of the evaluation; however, less than 50% of the Fall, 1987 and approximately 60% of the Spring, 1988 students returned the questionnaire.

The evaluation indicated that, overall, the Fall, 1987 Honors students were highly satisfied with their Honors courses. The students often expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to improve their skills, particularly in the foreign language courses and career-oriented courses as architecture, interior design and art. Overall, the students expressed approval with the quality of instruction, the originality of the subject matter, and the opportunity for class projects and class participation. Spring, 1988 survey findings were similar to Fall, 1987 findings.

Several evaluation questions will be discussed individually.

Question 1

In your opinion, what specific characteristics made this Honors course different from other courses you have taken?

The students felt that several characteristics differentiated their Honors course from other courses including the high level of involvement, the dedication and the competence of both instructors and students, the originality of the subject matter, the greater class interaction and participation, the small class size, and often, the heavier workload.

Some of the students' comments to this question are listed below.

- The high level of personal involvement for both instructor and students. Very time consuming and challenging.

- The teacher was very professional and the subject was taught as a university course.

- We are free to explore areas far beyond regular classroom projects on a much more professional basis

- Concepts were covered in more depth than in other courses.

- Working together as a group rather than having the teacher as a focal point.

- Personal growth, personal expression, group support, teacher involvement.

Some students expressed disappointment in the course. Some of their comments included:

- The lack of structure, the instructors' lack of control of the class.

- It was very hectic and unorganized. I never knew where I was going. My other classes were much more organized.

- The classroom atmosphere is too relaxed.

(Refer to Appendix I for a complete listing of responses.)

Question 2

Did this Honors course require more class participation than regular courses?

Nearly 82% of the Fall, 1987 and 90% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students stated that their Honors course required more class participation.

Question 3

Did this course meet with your expectations?

Almost 84% of the Fall, 1987 and 91% of the Spring, 1988 students stated that the course met their expectations. In general, the students expected a heavier workload, more class participation, and a more in-depth approach to the subject. Some of the students' comments included:

- It was more focused than an overview course.

- Yes, because I wanted to address political issues.

- Yes, because I got an opportunity to improve my writing skills.

- I was worried it would be difficult and it was. But I was extremely challenged and I learned a lot.

- It gave students a chance to expand and excel in a specialized area.

In one class, 75% of the Fall, 1987 students stated that the course had not met their expectations. The few students who expressed dissatisfaction with their Honors course made the following comments:

- No, much too superficial and a total lack of academic orientation.
- I did not find it terribly interesting.
- No, not as intellectual as I thought it would be.
- No, it was unorganized. Some assignments were too lengthy and repetitive.
- No, too large a class, not demanding enough.

(Refer to Appendix I for a complete listing of responses.)

Question 4

Did this Honors course require higher standards of performance from the students than what you have previously experienced? Please explain.

More than 75% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students and nearly 86% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students stated that their course required higher standards of performance. The students felt that more class participation was required, and that the writing and reading assignments were more complex. The students also stated that their Honors course required dedication and commitment. Several students who already had a bachelor's degree favorably compared their Honors course with an upper-division course. Some of the students' comments are listed below.

- Required discipline, interpretation and true understanding of material.
- Much more reading was required and critical and analytical skills were very important.
- We were expected to perform professionally.
- I have a degree from Ohio State, this course was similar to others I have taken.

- Standards at Mesa College are generally abysmal. This class, on the other hand, would have been on par with the best classes at UCSD

Some students did not feel that the standards of performance required were any higher than in other classes and made the following comments:

- Maybe not higher but different. More individual motivation and desire to participate were needed in order to benefit from the class.

- I think anyone could have taken this course.

- It was about the same as other courses from excellent teachers.

(Refer to Appendix I for a complete listing of responses.)

Question 5

Do you feel class size was adequate?

The majority of the students indicated that they felt that the class size was adequate. Only about 8% of the Fall, 1987 and 4% of the Spring, 1988 students felt that class size was inadequate. Almost all of those students indicating that class size was too large during Fall, 1987 were enrolled in a Spanish conversation class and felt that the class was too large; there were 20 students initially enrolled in that class, and 17 students completed the course. The students felt that such a large number of students hindered class participation.

Question 6

How would you describe the level of involvement in this course?

Approximately 57% of the Fall, 1987 students and approximately 62% of the Spring, 1988 students stated that they were very involved in their course. Many students commented on the high level of student participation. In most Honors classes, participation was encouraged through class discussions and class presentations. The students made the following comments:

- Everybody participated with comments and personal experiences.

- It was a necessity. You could not be in this class without major participation.

- Student involvement was very passionate at times, which is something that is not often found in the classroom.

- I felt some students were not taking it seriously enough.

- "Burnout" symptoms in several students.

- Everyone wanted to learn the language and all the students were very supportive of each other.

- Individuals interested in such a class have a natural tendency to want to participate.

- A number of topics were controversial and these were discussed openly in class.

(Refer to Appendix I for a complete listing of responses.)

Question 8

Do you have any comments about the grading procedures and tests?

The Fall, 1987 and Spring, 1988 Honors students were generally satisfied with the grading procedure and tests. They liked the Honors instructors' testing techniques because they did not rely on standard tests, but rather tested the students through essay exams, take-home exams, class participation and class presentations. Some of the comments are listed below.

- Fair and comprehensive.

- Tests were ambiguous. There were several possible answers.

- They are very straight forward and each student knows what is expected.

- Very chaotic, tests were challenged in every session due to mistakes and several possible answers.

- More writing assignments would have been beneficial to improve language skills.

- I have no clues as to how the work is graded.

- Vague! nebulous? ill-defined, ill-explained.

- I prefer having take-home exams and writing papers. This tactic required more personal investigation and changed the emphasis from memorization to understanding context and perspective.

- Grading was quite liberal. I had expected grading standards to be higher.

Question 9

Do you have any comments about the reading/writing assignments required for this course?

Most of the students expressed approval of the reading and writing assignments. Students often commented the workload was quite demanding. A few students stated they were bored, others felt that the material assigned should have been covered more thoroughly in class. Some comments included:

- I found the reading assignments to be fascinating.
- Not too demanding and directly related to exam material.
- Excellent selection of readings, and writing assignments were very challenging and interesting.
- Reading assignments were great! Writing topics were too superficial.
- I enjoyed going out into the community, interviewing an architect, photographing his work, and giving a slide presentation to the class.
- Too much memorization of specifics.
- Unrealistic and irrelevant to what the class was about.
- I was frustrated that the assigned readings were never discussed.
- Assignments were well chosen and contributed toward understanding this complicated subject.

Question 11

Do your think this course should be offered again? Please explain.

Approximately 91% of the Fall, 1987 and 97% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students felt that the course should be offered again. Several students stated that the course should be offered again but with some modifications. Two archeology students that enrolled during Fall, 1987 highly praised their instructor and wanted him to teach a different subject. Some comments are listed below.

- Yes, the course seems to be more on the level of an upper-division class.
- Yes, if you have the time it is an excellent course.

- Yes, especially for the high achiever.

- It is a terrific course. It helped me think and understand a little more about human nature, society, and the control one has over one's life.

- Yes, if there is an organized instructor.

- Yes, it started well then fizzled. It needs a more realistic approach to course topics.

- Yes, but with the condition that whoever teaches it can come on time and well prepared

- Yes, do provide for continuity at this level of quality.

- Yes, it circumvents the boredom and wasted time of larger, slower classes.

- Yes, excellent subject matter, well taught and very interesting.

- Yes, it really helps focus on the finer points of space planning, something that is not really done thoroughly in other classes.

- Yes, good environment, good preparation for students intending to go on to a university.

Question 13

Do you have any additional comments/suggestions?

Students offered suggestions they thought would improve the Honors Program. Some comments are listed below.

- The instructor is a very professional yet humorous, warm and understanding instructor. It was a pleasure to have been in her class.

- I have participated in other Honors classes and I feel this is an outstanding way of developing and inspiring professional quality artists.

- I regret I did not get more out of the class but that was my fault.

- Monitor the class.

- The Honors Program here at Miramar is a good incentive for students to achieve higher grades because of the improved opportunity to get into SDSU.

• The class strayed at times from the immediate subject. Sometimes students felt the class got out of control. Some repetition of points were made that were opinionated. Overall rather interesting.

• Keep up the Honors Program. It is outstanding.

• Stop making it so difficult for qualified students to enroll. You gave me a big run around that almost caused me not to take the class.

• I was under the impression that the Honors Program was different, interesting, and would enable us to get into the business program at SDSU more easily. None of this is true. There is quite a bit of work, more than in any other class, but for what? To say I took Honors classes? Forget it!

Faculty Evaluation

At the end of the semester, a faculty questionnaire was distributed to all instructors teaching an Honors course. The participating instructors were asked to evaluate the Honors students, to indicate what teaching methods they used, and how these differed from their normal teaching methodology. The instructors were also asked to offer suggestions and recommendations that might improve the administration of the program.

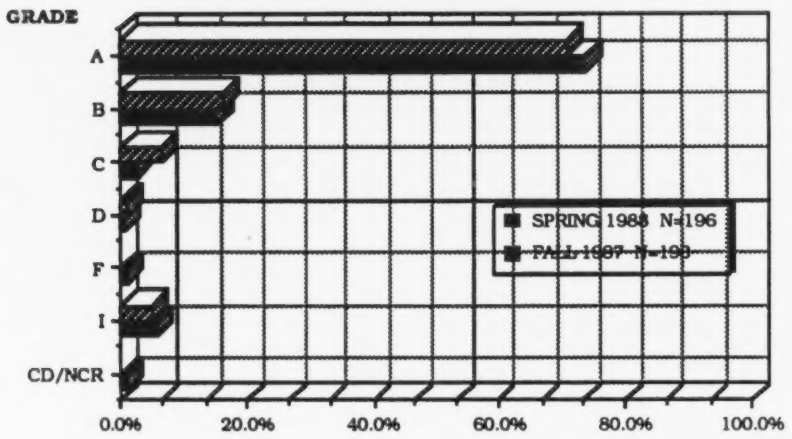
Participating instructors expressed many favorable comments about their Honors students. They believed the students to be more dedicated, more motivated and more capable than non-Honors students. Each section of the faculty evaluation will be discussed individually.

Grade Distribution

The Honors students performed very well in the Fall, 1987. Almost 74% received an "A" and more than 15% received a "B." Only 1% of the students failed and neither the instructors nor the students indicated a reason for the failures. There were a significant number of classes (20%) where every student in the class received an "A." More than 88% of the instructors stated that the grade distribution for their Honors class was higher or considerably higher than their non-Honors classes. One student who completed a student evaluation questionnaire stated: "Grading seems a little liberal." The grade distribution of the Honors students is shown in Figure 18 on the next page.

Figure 18

Honors Students' Grades



The instructors were asked whether they had adjusted their grading practices for the Honors class. More than 64% of the Fall, 1987 faculty stated that they had adjusted their grading practices in that they expected a better performance from the students and used different criteria in assigning grades; however, only 45% of the Spring, 1988 faculty stated that they had adjusted their grading practices. Some of the comments are indicated below.

- I expected much more class participation. The grade reflects the class participation and the overall achievement.
- I expect much more ability and dedication.
- I grade a bit more severely, particularly regarding style and research.
- Higher expectations; more difficult exams.
- I did not expect anyone to fail since this was a special course.

Qualification criteria

An analysis of the performance of the students who did not qualify for the course on any criteria, but were admitted with the permission of the instructor, revealed that these students performed very well (see Figures 16 & 17). Seventy-eight (78%) of the Fall, 1987 and almost 56% of the Spring, 1988 students received an "A" and 9.5% of the Fall, 1987 and 13% of the Spring, 1988 students received a "B." As mentioned earlier, although these students did not meet the admissions criteria, 35% of the Fall, 1987 and only 14.7% of the Spring, 1988 students had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Teaching Methods

Teaching methods varied with each instructor; however, lectures, discussions and student presentations were common to most classes. Some instructors required extensive research papers and many required special projects. Other methods included:

- •Case analysis
- •Forum presentation
- •Guest speakers
- •Computer practice sets
- •Field trips

Approximately 75% of the Fall, 1987 and Spring, 1988 instructors stated that they taught their Honors courses differently than their non-Honors courses. The instructors indicated that the high caliber of the students permitted the use of teaching methods that involved more thinking and reasoning on the part of the students.

The instructors believed that the small class size was more conducive to class discussions and field trips and allowed for more individual attention. Some of the comments included:

- There was much more interaction and a higher level of difficulty.
- Extensive emphasis on student participation.
- In my large survey course I never use the discussion technique and I never assign research.

All Honors instructors felt that the criteria for eligibility were appropriate. One instructor questioned the need for meeting GPA requirements when the student has a bachelor's degree or an advanced degree.

Expectations

When asked to compare the Honors students with their regular students the instructors unanimously responded that Honors students were "better" or "much better." The instructors also indicated that, with a few exceptions, the students met their expectations or exceeded them. The instructors believe the students to be more interested, more enthusiastic, more responsible and better prepared than regular students. Some of the comments are listed below.

- They were better than expected! More conscientious, more interested and curious, more appreciative.

- There were many more college graduates than I anticipated. There were some with advanced degrees and there were some who did not perform at full capacity, but I take full blame for that.

- Amount of interest, capacity and passion for research and self-achievement.

- The 12 students who finished the course were terrific. Of those who did not finish there were a couple who overestimated their ability.

The instructors were also asked if they would do anything different next time they taught the class. Most responded they would change the format slightly or require additional assignments. Four of the instructors stated they would not make any changes; two of these instructors had never taught the class before. A sample of the comments is included below.

- I would insist on a regular semester-long format with 3 hours per week.

- Yes, I would do a lengthy, in-depth interview of each candidate and use more stringent entry criteria in that interview.

- Be more rigorous with test dates, require more individual study, reorganize the material and maybe split the class into two consecutive semesters.

- I enjoyed teaching my Honors course. I made a few mistakes, most notably the "level" of student I initially aimed for. While I did get the type of students I desired, I feel that changing the focus of the course will make it more accessible to students at City and Mesa. I plan to spend time over the summer and next fall overhauling the course. Hopefully in another year I will teach this course again and be able to make it appealing to a wider audience.

Overall impression and recommendations

The instructors overall impressions were generally positive about the Honors Program and about the Honors students. Some of their comments follow:

- Excellent when students realize the special opportunity provided. Two students were disappointing in terms of initiative rather than capability.

- It is a good idea but it has generated so much jealousy among a few faculty that it is being wrecked by them. This class in particular has been blocked by the chair of the Social Science department.

- It's terrific!

- I am very pleased with it. The students and the administration have been generally good.

The instructors were asked if they had any recommendations for improving the administration of the program. They made the following suggestions:

- Have periodic meetings of Honors faculty for troubleshooting, sharing ideas.

- The recruitment should not be done by instructors in the program. It seems like a conflict of interest.

- Cut the red tape. Deans should hire more full-time instructors to teach Honors.

- I wish guest speakers could be paid more quickly.

- Try to reach students in other colleges and universities in the area.

- I think it is improving well with evaluation forms like this one.

- Students should be given extra units or some other tangible benefit from taking an Honors course. In my class, they are required to spend much more time than in a regular class. I feel that they are much better prepared to tackle real life business situations. I have attempted to teach this class as I was taught in my MBA program. It is often difficult to motivate students to take the challenge of an Honors Program where they might get a "B" when they could take a normal class with less work and receive an "A."

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This second report on the Honors program updates and provides information regarding the demographic and educational characteristics of Honors students. In addition to these quantitative data, other qualitative data are provided in the form of student and faculty comments and perceptions regarding the program.

Student Demographic and Educational Characteristics

The primary data source for the demographic and educational characteristics of the Honors students was the Student Profile Questionnaire distributed to students during the first week of classes.

There were 270 students enrolled in the Fall, 1987 semester and 285 students enrolled in the Spring, 1988 semester. Of the 270 students originally enrolled for the Fall, 1987 semester, 77 or approximately 29% dropped (this includes students who never attended class) leaving 193 students who completed. Of the 285 students originally enrolled in the Spring, 1988 semester, 90 students dropped, or approximately 32%, leaving 196 students who completed their Honors course (this includes students who never attended class).

Age. Analysis of the age distribution of the Honors students indicated that they were generally older than the general student population.

Gender. Females were over-represented in the Honors student population for both semesters under analysis, although differences were less pronounced during the Spring, 1988 semester. Approximately 65% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students and 57% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students were females compared to approximately 50% of the general student population for both semesters.

Ethnicity. The ethnic distributions of the Fall, 1987 and Spring, 1988 Honors students were different from the ethnic distribution of the general student population. During both semesters Caucasians were disproportionately represented among the Honors student population while Asian, Black, and Filipino students were under-represented. Native American and Hispanic students were strongly represented in the Honors population, and in the case of Hispanics were over-represented in the total Honors population. When examined by college, ethnic representation tended to differ significantly.

Educational Background. Among the Fall, 1987 Honors students, approximately 70% had previous college experience. Almost 32% of the Honors students had a college degree. Among the Spring, 1988 Honors

students,. the percent of students with previous college experience grew to 76%. Approximately 32% had a college degree.

Educational Goals

Short-term. Approximately 47% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students and 37% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students planned on transferring to a four year college. Approximately 17% of the Fall, 1987 Honors students, and 21% of the Spring, 1988 Honors students were taking classes for personal growth.

Long-term. Approximately 47% of the Honors students stated that they intended transfer to four-year college.

Student Evaluations

In general, the Honors students expressed approval of their Honors class and many commented favorably on the Honors Program in general. Students cited the individualized instruction, smaller class size, the intellectual challenge, and the more demanding nature of the assignments offered by their Honors class as particularly important.

Faculty Evaluations

Participating faculty expressed favorable impressions of the Honors Program. Instructors believed that their Honors students were academically superior to their regular students both in scholastic attitude and performance. They also cited the special opportunities that the Honors program provided, such as modern equipment and technologies, field trips, special purchases, and guest lecturers.

Goal Attainment Summary

As described in the Introduction, the Honors Program had four primary goals. Honors program evaluation conclusions for the Fall, 1987 and Spring, 1988 semesters are presented and discussed relative to these goals.

Challenge high achieving students. Survey responses and comments from students and faculty suggest that, for the most part, the program accomplished the goal of providing an academically challenging educational experience for the students enrolling in Honors courses.

Enhance the retention of high achieving students. A primary rationale for the creation of the Honors program was the assertion that high achieving students drop out of college at similar rates to lower achieving students

(Heist, 1968), and that those institutions with special programs for high achieving students experience greater retention of targeted students (Farnsworth, 1982). The drop rates of Honors students during the semesters under study (including "no-shows") were approximately 29% in Fall, 1987, and approximately 32% in Spring, 1988. These drop rates are an improvement over the previous two semesters, perhaps due to more stringent enforcement of entrance criteria. There were some minor demographic differences among the Honors students who dropped, and those who dropped their Honors courses also tended to drop most of their other classes. Data were not available to compare the drop rate of non-Honors students with comparable GPA's during this same period.

Transfer to four-year institutions. As stated in the Fall, 1989 class schedule, the Honors program is designed to enhance "the transferability of students to the UC and CSU systems." Of the Honors students surveyed, approximately 29% intended to earn a bachelor's degree, almost 24% intended to earn a master's degree and nearly 6% stated they planned to obtain a doctoral degree. Overall, almost 50% of Honors students without a degree planned to transfer to a 4-year institution at some point in their academic careers.

It is not precisely known at this time how participation in the Honors program has enhanced the transferability of participating students. However, interviews conducted with academic advisers, the articulation coordinator, and the Dean of the Business Department at San Diego State University (SDSU) and the articulation coordinator and academic counselors at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) indicate that these individuals have little or no awareness of the SDCCD Honors program. They also indicated that, to their knowledge, no special consideration is given to Honors students from any program in terms of transfer or for admission to impacted programs at the universities beyond that normally given to community college transfer students who meet standard entrance requirements. Both SDSU and UCSD accept six units of "Special Topics" (265) courses for transfer, generally for elective credit, and the majority of Honors program courses (approximately 70% during the Fall, 1987 semester and 87% during the Spring, 1988 semester) are numbered as 265 courses. The limited number of transferable units from 265 courses may have the effect of actually deterring some high achieving university-bound transfer students from enrolling in Honors courses. The implementation of the Honors Business core at Miramar college may, if special arrangements with SDSU are made, eventually give preference to the Honors student for admission. This program is designed to serve students in business majors intending to transfer to San Diego State University or the University of San Diego.

A core of Honors General Education courses is currently (Fall, 1989) being offered at City College which will apply toward satisfying university transfer requirements while offering the educational enrichment sought by Honors students.

Employability. The employment status of the participants indicated that approximately two-thirds were working at least part-time. Their occupations were diverse and generally unrelated to the Honors courses they were enrolled in. Several students enrolled in the vocational Honors courses commented that the opportunity to use the most current equipment and technologies available through the Honors program will enhance their employability. It is not known at this time what effect participation in the Honors program has had on the employability of participants.

Increase satisfaction and enrich the educational experience for participating faculty. Comments by participating faculty suggested that they viewed the program favorably. In particular, faculty enjoyed having the opportunity to work with higher achieving students. Most faculty surveyed indicated that participation in the Honors Program also improved their existing curriculum and delivery strategies through the development and teaching of "enriched" courses.

Build and maintain a positive public attitude toward the San Diego Community College District. Community, K-12, and business surveys were not conducted, thus public attitudes toward the SDCCD as a result of the Honors Program are difficult to ascertain. High school counselors surveyed at two area high schools indicated no awareness of the Honors program, but once given an orientation to the goals of the program, suggested they would recommend the program to their high achieving graduates who intend to enroll in college. Among those surveyed within the Honors program, the vast majority viewed the program favorably.

As discussed earlier in this report, a detailed evaluation of the Honors program is limited due to the difficulty of quantifying an "enriched" educational experience. Another problem in accomplishing a detailed evaluation of the program is that its structure has not been constant over the course of the evaluation period. Currently, (Fall, 1989) the Honors committee has defined three "strands" to the program. The first, "departmental Honors" consists of individual sections, seminars, contracts, or internships proposed by separate departments. In the fall of 1987 a second strand, the Honors business core curriculum was introduced at Miramar College to serve business students planning to transfer to four-year institutions. A third strand, which is offered at City College, is the Honors general education core which provides lower division foundation courses for transfer students of any major.

Comments by participating students and faculty indicated generally high levels of satisfaction with the program. Participating students were generally impressed with the competency of the instructors, and the quality of the subject matter presented. Honors faculty perceived the Honors students as generally higher caliber and were generally pleased with the reduced class size the Honors Program afforded. Both groups generally recommended the continuation of the program.

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APPENDIX A

SIX SEMESTERS OF HONORS

SIX SEMESTERS OF HONORS

	Fall 86	Spring 87	Fall 87	Spring 88	Fall 88	Spring 89
Number of Courses Offered	11	22	20	23	19	19
Total Number of Students Enrolled	110	276	270	285	264	245
Students Completed	74	180	193	196	199	163
Students Dropped	36	96	77	90	65	82
Drop Rate (Including no shows)	32.7%	34.8%	28.5%	31.5%	24.6%	33.5%
Total Honors Program ADA	7.95	23.55	22.01	24.26	21.8	18.32**
Number of Special Topics Classes (265)	9 81.8%	16 72.7%	14 70.0%	20 87.0%	15 78.9%	14 73.7%
Number of General Ed. Classes	2 18.2%	6 27.3%	6 30.0%	3 13.0%	4 21.1%	4 26.3%
Number of Students With Degrees (Associate or higher)	16 14.5%	53 19.2%	77 28.5%	83 29.1%	76 28.8%	54*** 22.0%
Average Age Range	25-29 yrs.	25-29 yrs.	30-34 yrs.	30-34 yrs.	30-34 yrs.	30-34 yrs.
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET	$50,000	$50,000	1987/1988 $134,370	See Fall 1987	1988/1989 $135,130	See Fall 1988

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Grades	Fall 86	Spring 87	Fall 87	Spring 88	Fall 88	Spring 89
A	55	139	143	139	128	111
B	11	29	32	32	34	33
C	3	8	6	13	11	7
D	2	2	4	2	3	-0-
F	3	2	6	-0-	3	2
I	-0-*	-0-*	-0-*	10	20	9
Cr/NC	-0-	-0-	2	-0-	-0-	1
TOTAL	**74**	**180**	**193**	**196**	**199**	**163**

* = Incompletes changed to grades
** = Figures for Spring 1989 ADA are through the second period
*** = Degree information for three classes not available

ETHNICITY

	Fall 86		Spring 87		Fall 87		Spring 88		Fall 88		Spring 89	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Amer. Indian	-0-	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.3	2.4	1.2	1.9	1.5	.4	1.4
Asian	-0-	7.8	7.6	7.5	3.7	7.5	3.5	7.5	6.8	7.2	6.5	7.2
Black	5.5	9.2	2.7	9.4	3.7	9.2	2.4	7.9	3.4	9.1	3.3	7.9
Caucasian	64.4	63.9	71.6	64.3	74.8	64.3	71.3	66.7	78.0	64.9	78.0	66.8
Filipino	2.8	4.0	1.3	3.7	2.2	4.1	.7	4.0	1.5	10.6	2.4	4.0
Hispanic	9.6	9.9	8.0	10.0	9.3	10.3	15.4	9.7	6.8	4.1	5.7	10.1
Other	15.1	2.2	3.1	2.3	2.6	2.2	3.5	2.2	1.1	2.2	2.9	2.1
No Response	2.6	1.8	4.4	1.4	2.2	1.1	.7	.8	.4	.6	.8	.5

GENDER

	Fall 86		Spring 87		Fall 87		Spring 88		Fall 88		Spring 89	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
MALE	22.9	51.3	43.1	50.0	35.2	51.1	42.7	50.2	30.3	51.8	40.4	47.9
FEMALE	77.1	48.5	56.9	50.0	64.8	48.7	57.3	49.6	69.7	48.2	59.6	52.1

A = Honors Students
B = Total Student Population

* = Source: Spring '89 Opening Day Enrollment Report

Prepared by: Research & Planning
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ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES

DEC 22 1989